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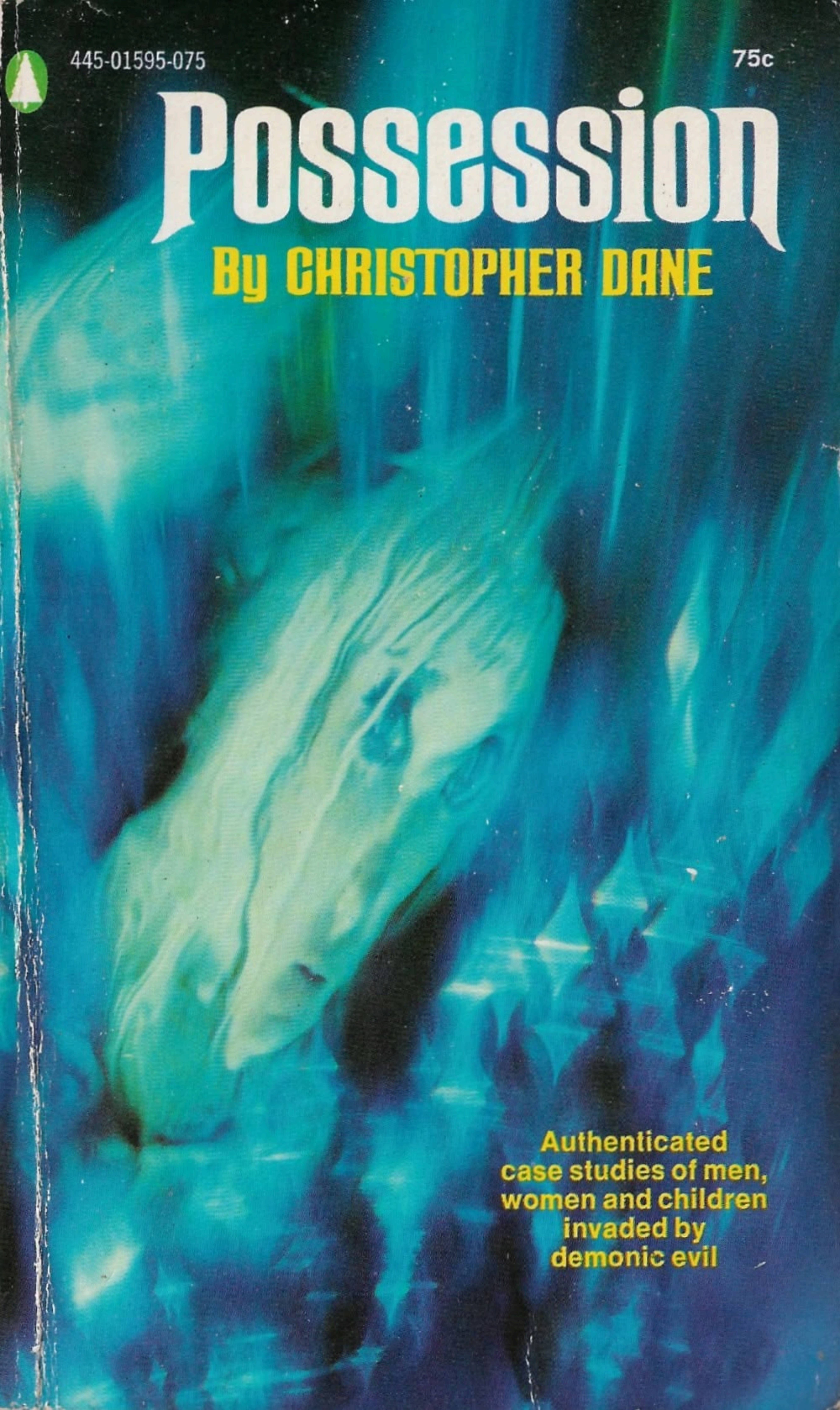
Possession

By CHRISTOPHER DANE



Authenticated case studies of men, women and children invaded by demonic evil

"In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, I command you to leave this child. Depart now and nevermore show thy face or thy characteristics on Earth. Depart now, and relinquish the unholy hold you have over this child . . ."

These powerful words are being spoken by an exorcist to a demon who has taken possession of a child's soul—in the 20th century!

Even today, malevolent spirits from beyond time invade the bodies of modern men, women and children, states this astonishing collection of *bona fide* case studies. After reading POSSESSION, even the most confirmed skeptic will be hard put to deny the presence of unseen powers moving among us. POSSESSION—Chilling, amazing, 100% proven true!

Possession

By CHRISTOPHER DANE

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POSSESSED BY A KILLER

It was July 2, 1929, and Lady Monica Stewart of Stewart Manor, Inverness, Scotland, was returning home with her chauffeur after a day's shopping trip to Edinburgh. Lady Monica was unmindful of the torrential rain pouring down outside her Rolls-Royce, for she was particularly delighted with a purchase she had made that day at a private auction. Throughout the trip home she could not resist fingering the rope of black jewels around her neck, smiling to herself as she did so.

The Rolls crept slowly along the steep roads that followed Loch Ness. Lady Monica was startled from her reverie by a loud exclamation from her chauffeur.

"What is it, Henry?" she asked.

"Begging your pardon, m'am, but something seems to be the matter with the wiring. We just lost our headlights," a voice thick with the Highlands answered her.

"Oh, dear, does that mean we have to stop?"

"No, m'am, I think I know these roads well enough for us to continue. It will take us much longer, though."

Lady Monica settled back in the seat. She was not annoyed at the delay. Her only concern was that they eventually reach home—and reach home safely.

The car had gone on for several more minutes when the storm suddenly unleashed its unprecedented fury. Henry Ferguson pulled to the side of the road and stopped the vehicle.

"I'm sorry, m'am, but this rain has gotten worse. I can't see anything. We'll have to stop."

Lady Monica nodded.

"Maybe I can get out and see if I can find the loose wires, though," the chauffeur offered. "It would be better than just sitting here."

"Thank you, Ferguson."

The chauffeur fiddled under the hood of the large car for several minutes, unable to find the loose wires. He noted that everything was completely rain-soaked, anyway, and doubted that he could fix the headlights under the circumstances. He was doing his best when he heard the car door open and saw Lady Monica step outside, holding an umbrella over her head.

The whiteness of Lady Monica's throat proved a dramatic background for the string of jewels around her neck. There was blackness all around them, black from the sky, from the loch, from the car, from Lady Monica's dress and umbrella, and blackness from the jewels set against her white throat. Ferguson was startled to feel himself falling, swirling in the darkness. Then he heard the voice, the voice of his lady the Queen:

"You must behead the one with the black necklace."

"Aye, my Lady," the chauffeur replied hypnotically. From somewhere in his mind he could see the high forehead of Queen Elizabeth I incline slightly towards him.

As if she were far away the man could hear Lady

Monica speak to him. Vaguely he was aware that she was standing beside him, peering under the hood of the Rolls-Royce. Again he could see the imposing figure of his Queen, nodding at him. Ferguson returned the nod and spoke to himself:

"Aye, my Lady, Gavin Bulle will behead her."

Ferguson seemed to be pushed to the rear of his own mind. Gavin Bulle stepped forward, raised the chauffeur's arm and grasped the hood. A surge of energy passed through his arm and in what seemed to him a slow-motion gesture he brought the hood down, forcefully, upon the unsuspecting Lady Monica.

The woman uttered a strangled cry and slumped unconscious against the front of the car. Once more Gavin Bulle raised the chauffeur's arm and crashed the hood of the car with a sickening thud into the flesh of Lady Monica, killing her.

Gavin Bulle now worked to sever completely the head of "the one with the black necklace." Working unhurriedly, he reached into the car for the black leather tool pouch. His hand passed over the metric wrenches and rested upon the file. His fingers closed over the tool and he lifted it from the case. He methodically applied it to the edge of the hood until he had sharpened the steel to a fine edge. Bulle delicately arranged Lady Monica's body, then slammed the hood once more upon her inert frame. The woman's head rolled grotesquely forward, lodging between the battery and the radiator. The sightless eyes of Lady Monica stared at Bulle. Blood gushed forward onto the road to be washed away by the torrents of rain.

Bulle picked the head out of the car and carried it to the rear. He opened up the trunk and placed the head within it. Then he gathered up the ghastly corpse and placed it, too, into the trunk.

Bulle-Ferguson slid behind the wheel of the car and slowly turned it to face the steep cliff overlooking Loch Ness. He bent over the hand throttle for a few minutes, then started the car rolling slowly towards the edge. The vehicle picked up momentum; and at the last moment, the killer jumped from the Rolls. The black car, carrying its grisly load, plunged over the embankment and sank into the loch.

Ferguson struggled to his feet, trying to understand what had happened. Something within him struggled for conscious control, and Ferguson again retreated before the dominant force within him, Gavin Bulle.

"The Tower," he thought with sudden clarity. "I must get to the Tower."

Clutching an injured hand to his side, the man moved off into the darkness.

The next morning young Johnny Simms was pedaling his bicycle along the same hilly road. The skies had cleared, the day was sunny and warm. As Simms approached the scene of the previous night's debacle, he could see something shiny and black partially submerged in the waters of the lake below. Simms got off his bicycle and walked to the edge of the cliff. Below him he could see the top of a Rolls-Royce.

Johnny Simms flagged down a passing motorist and asked to be taken to the next town. A Rolls-Royce, he said, had plummeted over the edge of the embankment.

Police officers arrived on the scene and quickly made arrangements to have the car hoisted from the water. Several hours later the water-filled vehicle was lifted up to the road.

The officers determined that the car belonged to Lady Monica Stewart, for the purse on the front seat contained her identification. They were curious to note the sharpened hood of the car and became suspicious of foul play. The trunk was pried open and the officers gaped in horror at the decapitated body of Lady Monica.

The missing Ferguson was immediately the prime suspect. An all-out effort was launched to find the vanished chauffeur. When a few days' hunt for the man failed to turn up any clues, the case was turned over to Scotland Yard.

The Yard determined that Lady Monica had traveled to Edinburgh for a private auction, where she had purchased the necklace which had been found caught in the engine of the car. The man who had sold Lady Monica this necklace had departed for a vacation, however, so any follow-up of this clue had to be postponed until the man could be found. In the meantime the search continued for Henry Ferguson.

The Yard was stymied in its attempt to determine a motive. It could not have been robbery, for a diamond bracelet still adorned the headless corpse of the hapless aristocrat. Furthermore, Lady Monica was known to be on excellent terms with her chauffeur. Ferguson was described by all who knew him as a mild man who eschewed violence.

A citizen stepped forward to report that he had seen a man answering Ferguson's description boarding a train for London. He was still wearing his chauffeur's uniform, which caused the Yard to speculate that if Ferguson were indeed the killer, his action had not been premeditated.

The search led to London, where another man provided the next clue. Adolph Aitkins, of Bloomsbury, London, was a tour guide for London's infamous Tower. A man had come on one of Aitkin's tours, expressing unusual interest in the landmark.

"Is this truly the place where the executions took place?"

Aitkins nodded.

The man had a faraway look in his eyes. "I, too, have been a headsman," he said.

Aitkins stared at the man, wondering if he were in the presence of a madman.

"Aye, 'twas in 1587, it was," the man had explained. "This is where my Lady died."

Aitkins answered slowly. "Yes, this is where Anne Boleyn was beheaded."

The stranger had asked if he could come to the Tower again and Aitkins had assured him that another tour was scheduled for the next day.

That evening Aitkins pondered the strange man, remembering the newspaper accounts of the Lady Monica killing in Scotland. He decided to call the police.

The next morning Aitkins was at the Tower with two Yardsmen. As Ferguson approached, the two Yardsmen stepped forward to arrest him.

"Henry Ferguson?" they queried.

"Nay, I be Gavin Bulle," the man answered. "There is no one in the furthest reaches of England who has not heard of Gavin Bulle."

The Yardsmen shrugged their shoulders at this cryptic remark and grasped the man by the arms. He offered no resistance.

Ferguson was taken to a Glasgow prison for questioning; but through all interrogation efforts, he remained silent.

"I'm not Henry Ferguson," was all he would say. "My name is Gavin Bulle. I am a certified executioner of the kingdom."

"Whom do you serve?" one inspector asked him.

"Why, Queen Bess," Ferguson replied.

To further questions he would answer naught.

Psychiatrists were called upon to assist with the case, but still the prisoner would not speak. The learned doctors emerged from the cell shaking their heads.

"He is besieged with delusions," was all they could offer.

Ferguson still insisted he was Gavin Bulle, an executioner from the sixteenth century. Eventually the Yard decided to call upon an historian. Frank T. Bagby, of the Royal London Historical Society, conferred with Ferguson for several hours. When he finally emerged from Ferguson's cell, Bagby requested a red costume and a black hood. Mystified, the Yard complied. Attired in this costume and in the company of a stenographer, Bagby again entered the prisoner's cell. He stared Ferguson directly in the eye and made the following remark:

"I am Gavin Bulle. I have brought the sword down on many people."

Ferguson returned Bagby's stare. "Now how can that be?" he replied. "There be only one Gavin Bulle and that be myself. I am the Queen's executioner."

Bagby pressed Ferguson—Bulle for more details.

"What day is this?"

Bulle shuddered "February it is, and cold, too, as is February's wont."

"What is the year?"

"1587."

The stenographer looked up from her notebook, startled, then jotted down the year Ferguson had given. The date, in actuality, was July, 1929.

Bagby returned this information to the Inspector, who decided to interrogate Ferguson himself.

"I understand that you are Gavin Bulle," the Inspector said.

"Aye, that I am."

"And you were the one who beheaded her Ladyship."

"I did."

"How did you kill her?"

"With an ax," Ferguson stated. "An ax grew out of the hood. I had to strike many a blow before her head rolled off."

"She did not die quickly, then?"

"No, I had time to hear her say: "*In manus tuas domine.*"

"Ah, so you know Latin."

Ferguson looked up with surprise. "I thought it was French."

At this point the historian, Frank Bagby, resumed the questioning. The Inspector, unaware of Bagby's line of research, listened with fascination.

"What was the time when you fulfilled the Queen's orders?" the historian asked.

Ferguson-Bulle replied promptly: "February 8, 1587, at 8:00 in the morning."

The historian nodded, smiled to himself.

"And after you had beheaded her, what color was my Lady's hair?"

"It was very white. I could see that it was white when I carried my Lady to the trunk which served poorly as a coffin. Queen Elizabeth will see that she is buried properly."

"She has already attended to it," the historian replied. Then he nodded to the Inspector. "Let us leave him now."

The two men and the stenographer left the prison cell in silence. Later, in the Inspector's office, Bagby explained what had happened.

"Inspector, that man in there thinks he is Gavin Bulle—the man who beheaded Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, on February 8, 1587. It was the exact day and hour that the execution took place!"

Bagby assembled the facts for the astounded Inspector. First of all, 8:00 A.M. was the precise moment of the ill-fated Queen's death. Mary Stuart's last words had been those repeated by Ferguson: "*In manus tuas domine.*"

Gavin Bulle, a certified executioner, had, indeed, brought the ax down on her. When Mary's head separated from her body her wig had fallen off, revealing to those nearby that the Queen's hair was white.

"There you have it," Bagby said. "He completely reconstructed the execution of Mary Stuart. Yet he knew facts of the beheading for which I had to search. Frankly, I believe it was impossible for him to have known all those things."

"What are you suggesting then?"

"I don't know about this, but it almost seems as though Henry Ferguson is being possessed by the executioner Gavin Bulle. But why?"

The Inspector shook his head. "The whole case is bizarre."

A few days after this major breakthrough the man who had sold the necklace to Lady Monica was located. Dwight Jacobs identified the necklace as the one he had sold Lady Monica, but could shed no further light upon the case. The beads had been valued at thirty pounds, and though Jacobs had thought them unextraordinary, Lady Monica had seemed inordinately pleased with them.

The Inspector decided to pursue any clue possible from the beads, for it seemed that they were the most promising motive for the murder. All of Lady Monica's other belongings had either been in the front seat of the car or the trunk, while the necklace had been wound around the machinery under the hood where the crime had occurred.

The Inspector had the gems sent to a jeweler and formally appraised. The results of the analysis were astounding.

"These were the beads worn by Mary Stuart when she was beheaded," the excited jeweller called. "I have read of them in the royal inventories. They have been missing for centuries! Where did you find them?"

The Inspector begged off answering and asked for the use of the jewels once more. He was puzzled, as he had been throughout the entire case.

The Inspector called the psychiatrist and Bagby. Together they went to Ferguson's cell in Glasgow. The Inspector dangled the beads before Ferguson's startled eyes.

The sight of the beads produced an extraordinary effect on Ferguson. Again he felt the swirling blackness, the dazed feeling that there were two parts of him struggling for conscious control. Gavin Bulle faded to the background and Henry Ferguson cried out:

"The beads! Those are the beads Lady Monica was wearing that night!"

"What happened that night?" the Inspector queried.

Ferguson lowered his head into his hands and spoke in a voice torn with emotion.

"I don't know why—I just had to do it. Something forced me." Ferguson looked up at the men, as if begging for understanding. "My arm just started to go up, then it came crashing down. I could not control it."

The psychiatrist stepped forward. "What happened after that, Ferguson?"

The man shook his head. "I don't know. I know nothing of what has happened since."

Two days later Ferguson withstood a brief sanity hearing. He was acquitted from the third degree murder charge on the basis of insanity. He was sent to a mental institution where he could receive competent psychiatric care.

Did Henry Ferguson kill Monica Stewart, or did some entity from the past—Gavin Bulle—seize control of the man because of the powerful influence exerted over him by the physical stimulus of the necklace worn by Mary Stuart the day she was beheaded?

Who was Gavin Bulle? Was he actually the spirit of the long-dead executioner, come back to once more perform his duty? Or was Henry Ferguson actually Gavin Bulle in another lifetime, now reincarnated as a Scottish Highlander? If a person can be possessed by a separate entity out of the past or from another dimension of being, it should also be possible for a person to be possessed by a fragmented part of his own past—a past which may include many lifetimes and many memories. If Henry Ferguson were the reincarnation of Gavin Bulle, perhaps the sight of the beads, which he had last seen on Mary Stuart, caused him to activate temporarily his former life as the Queen's executioner, submerging his present personality in the process. In such an event Henry Ferguson can truly be said to have been possessed by a personality at once alien to him and at the same time himself.

Or, perhaps, spirits of moody killers, publicly sanctioned or not, roam the earth, restless and uneasy about the deeds they performed while in the flesh, seeking always to return to the scenes or the circumstances of their crimes, to relive the cause of their discontent.

SPECTRAL PREACHER WHO INVADED A CORPSE

"Sailor!" the massive seaman called to one of his shipmates.

A younger man looked up apprehensively at the large brute staring coldly down at him. "Aye," he replied, "what is it, Mac?"

"See that you coil those ropes over there for me, and do it prettily. I've a mind to start my whittling."

The other sailors on the deck of the H.M.S. *Wellington* (not its true name) scowled at the big man while the young sailor muttered a curse under his breath. No one had the nerve to step up to Mac, for his strong right arm had bruised and flattened many a dissident sailor.

As the young sailor trudged over to the ropes, Mac sneered and drew out his knife.

"Remember," he said, menacingly, "do it well, or I'll be talking to you again."

The burly man then took out a piece of soft wood and began to carve, freed from his shipboard duties—at least until a superior officer came around.

"He's a bad one, he is," muttered one sailor to a friend, close by. "Sometimes he's like the devil himself when it comes to meanness. It's a good thing young Beauchamp didn't attempt to pick a fight, though, or we might have had another burial at sea—and this time by murder, not that foul disease on board."

"That's the truth, mate," his friend replied, speaking furtively. He had no desire to be overheard by the ugly Mac. "He's got the devil in him. When his time comes, his body will be claimed by the fiery demons of Hell!"

A glance from Mac closed further conversation.

The H.M.S. *Wellington* had been seventeen days out of its home port of Plymouth, England, in June of 1834, bound for the Pacific island of Tahiti, when an unknown disease had befallen her. The ship's surgeon, unable to ascertain the cause of the disease, could only guess at the treatment, and he was trying his best to keep the illness from reaching epidemic proportions. Already, though, two had died and been buried at sea.

The crew was taken by surprise when big Mac succumbed to the shipboard illness. Two days before he fell ill, many had seen him harassing young Beauchamp on the foreward deck. At that time, none of them dared raise a voice against the ill-tempered man, for no sailor on board could best him in any encounter. Now it seemed that Mac would meet the only opponent he could not beat: death.

The ship's surgeon treated the man as best he could, but all of Mac's hardy strength seemed to have deserted him. The sailor's breath came in gasps, and only the tightness in his face indicated the great pain he was undergoing. Finally, Mac drew one last painful breath, rolled his eyes upward, and died.

The doctor checked Mac's pulse, gravely lowered his eyelids. "He's dead," the physician declared. He turned to another sailor. "Prepare him for burial," the doctor ordered.

The boatswain was summoned, and under his directions two other members of the crew laid out Mac's body upon a table in the fo'castle and notified the ship's sailmaker to cut cloth for a shroud.

As soon as Mac's body had been prepared, the rest of the crew was summoned to pay their final respects to the dead man. It was a duty none of them enjoyed, for Mac had never had friends aboard the *Wellington*. Still, a tradition is a tradition, and if Mac had not been able to earn their respect in life, they would show him that a British sailor knew how to properly observe the dead.

The last few sailors were filing past the body when all at once one of the crew uttered a hoarse cry and hastily crossed himself. "The body . . . It's moving!"

The crew clustered around the body and stared. Mac's body started quivering, then it gave a violent jerk and sat upright on the table.

"Impossible," the doctor whispered.

The jaws of the corpse seemed to be struggling, as if it were trying to articulate. Then, before an audience of astonished sailors, the corpse began to speak!

"My brothers, it is never too late to live in the love of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Repent of your sins, live a life of righteousness, and you, too, shall know the bounteous grace of our Lord."

"Get the captain," the doctor ordered. "Hurry!"

The boatswain hastily dispatched a crewman to fetch the captain. When the two officers returned, they listened to the concluding remarks of the most bizarre sermon they had ever heard.

Here was a man, legally dead, the roughest member of crew, preaching in eloquent terms of the rewards of Christian life. Mac had been coarse, illiterate, scornful of religion while alive. Yet now, speaking in a voice completely unlike his own, he was urging his mates to do the very things he had abhorred while yet in the flesh.

"He is possessed," one of the crewmen cried, with rising hysteria in his voice.

"That's not Mac," another agreed.

"But it's not a devil, either," the first man argued. "Have you ever known a demon to speak such words?"

"It sounds more like a preacher. Holy Mary, I never thought I would live to see such a thing."

Just as the sailors' whispered conversation was ending, the corpse concluded its speech. With no further warning, it again fell into a prone position. Once again the body appeared quite dead, but this time the doctor was less eager to pronounce it so. The crew was uneasy, not knowing what next to expect.

Several hours later the corpse had not moved, and by evening it was decided to bury Mac at sea.

This strange experience caused more than one man to review the manner of his living, for how else could such a thing be possible unless ordained by some supernatural power?

Can there truly exist preachers such as the one who visited the H.M.S. *Wellington*, preachers who give a new and slightly humorous interpretation to the word "itinerant?" One who not only travels from place to place to deliver his sermons, but one who travels from corpse to corpse!

I LOST MY WIFE TO A DEMON

It was a cool, full moonlit evening. The only sound in the room was the gentle rustle of cloth, as a light breeze breathed in through the window. Bill Adams lay in peaceful slumber, his wife beside him. Adams rolled over on his side, sighed in his sleep.

"Out, thou foul demon! Why dost thou torment me? Go, and leave me in peace."

Adams' eyes fluttered open, his body tensed, his mind snapped to immediate alertness.

"Wilt thou never leave me and my afflicted family? Go, I abjure thee, in the name of the light. Leave me be!"

Adams could not believe his ears. The strange words, the King James English, were issuing forth from the lips of his wife. What ghastly visage had come to visit her, what character of a bizarre nightmare? Adams turned slowly to his wife, his arm outstretched to shake her into wakefulness.

"Thou shalt never claim this body or this soul. Leave me, for though thou try me sorely, I shall never yield to thee."

Mona Adams was sitting upright in bed, her eyes staring firmly into the darkness at the foot of the bed. With a sudden attack of fear, Bill Adams realized that his wife was not dreaming. She was addressing the demon she had claimed for years was trying to invade her body, the demon which Adams had been convinced was only a figment of her imagination.

"Mona, what's going on? There's nothing."

Adams' eyes had finally grown accustomed to the light. The force of Mona's stare had led his eyes to the foot of the bed, and what he saw in the pale moonlight caused a sickening wave of nausea to shake his intestines and cut off his words.

"O my God," he uttered slowly. "O my God, my God."

The creature was loathsome, hideous looking. It was surrounded by a sickly luminescent cloud of green, and the face was a living nightmare. White fangs curled around a blubbery, fish-like mouth. Corpse-like hair flowed around the perimeter of the head, deathly gray in color. The eyes dominated the horrible visage. Bright orange orbs, like endless tunnels through which one could be forever lost, shone intensely on Bill Adams and his wife. Most hideous of all, though, was the quite human emotion gleaming incongruously in the primeval creatures' eyes, the all-too-human stare of savage lust.

"What is it?" Adams cried, his voice cracking.

Neither the creature nor his wife responded to his cry. Mona seemed hypnotized by the vile thing; she seemed unable to break eye contact.

"Thou loathsome denizen of hell, thou shalt roast for what thou has attempted with me, thou shalt—"

"Enough!" Adams cried. "For God's sake, stop it!" He lunged over the side of the bed and flicked on the overhead light. The creature vanished as light flooded the room. Bill and Mona Adams reached mutely for each other, and Bill held the sobbing body of his wife in his arms.

Bill Adams met Mona Jolinsky in 1956, while both were in college. Something about her immediately attracted him to her. Perhaps it was the pensive elusiveness that lured him towards her, urging him to try and capture those qualities within her. Perhaps it was the hint of the exotic she displayed in her tastes and interests.

Mona was deeply involved in the occult, and practiced many of its related disciplines. She was accomplished in Hatha Yoga, meditated often, and had studied a few texts on ceremonial magic.

She frequently took solitary walks through the woods in back of the college, and when Bill persuaded her to take him along, he was amazed at the empathy she seemed to share with the animals. Her influence extended to the plant kingdom, for no one could persuade plants to grow as strongly and beautifully as she.

There were times that Bill would come upon Mona while she was engaged in other practices, and though he never knew much about these, they gave him a vaguely uneasy feeling. He could not be sure, but he felt at times that Mona's assiduous reading of the Bible did not necessarily restrict her to the beneficent side of occultism. Indeed, sometimes it seemed as though she flirted with the darker, malevolent forces.

Aside from Mona's occult leanings, the girl was very musically minded, and she had a jovial air about her that at once charmed and delighted her young suitor.

The two had been dating for some time; and, just before graduation, Bill gathered his courage to ask Mona to marry him. Mona regarded Bill gravely.

"I will marry you," she told the anxiously waiting Bill, "but not because I love you. Don't get me wrong, though, because I am very fond of you. I'll marry you because I know I must. It is my karma and yours."

She looked at him hopelessly, then clutched his hand. "Oh, Bill, I'm afraid it won't work out very well, not at all. Still, if it is to be, it will be, and there's nothing we can do about it."

Mona broke off when she saw the strange expression in Bill's eyes. She leaned over and hugged him impulsively. "Oh, forget all that nonsense. Yes, dear, yes, I'll marry you!"

Bill forgot Mona's sad prophecy in the years immediately following their marriage. Both of them had come from Nebraska farm stock, and they were eager to try the city. They settled enthusiastically in Omaha, where Bill found work as a typesetter for a large Omaha printing operation.

The two experienced no marital difficulties other than the usual adjustment of one person's habits to another's until Mona became pregnant with the Adams' first child. It was then that something began to go very wrong, causing Bill to remember the unhappy prediction that their marriage would "not work out very well, not at all."

Mona began having a series of terrifying nightmares, all on the same theme: she insisted that a demon was trying to possess her body. She became resentful of Bill, waspish and ill-tempered.

According to Mona, the demon appeared to her in two forms. One was as a frightening creature with a human face, the talons and legs of an eagle, the body and tail of a cat, and the leathery wings of a bat. The other form was far more insidious. It was of a man, bearing a strong resemblance to Bill.

Although this demon never spoke to Mona, she held

it responsible for the wild ideas she found herself entertaining. She was convinced that it was trying to persuade her that Bill was the source of her problems; and after a time, it appeared as though the creature had succeeded in convincing her of it, for she began acting hostile whenever her husband was near her.

Bill felt certain that his wife was the victim of some delusion, and it hurt him deeply that in her fantasies she would cast him as a villain. He could not believe his wife was becoming insane, nor could he accept her own explanation of what was happening to her. He did not know what he should do.

One day, while working out in the garage, Bill heard a tremendous crash in the kitchen. When he rushed to the area, he found Mona standing amidst thousands of shards of glass. She looked confused, horrified.

"It was the glass pitcher," she explained. "I don't know why I did it. I just felt an uncontrollable urge to smash it."

On another occasion, Bill was rummaging about in the basement when he found a sheet, ripped to shreds.

"Mona," he asked, confronting her with the bits of cloth, "did you do this?"

"Yes," she answered helplessly. "I don't know what came over me. I felt this urge to destroy. To destroy whatever I could get my hands on the fastest."

Then, somewhere in the midst of several like incidents, Mona began to get defensive about her actions. She lied, tried to hide any evidence of her destructive moods.

Finally, Bill came upon her while in the act of strangling a neighborhood cat. He rushed towards her angrily and tried to pull her away from the unfortunate animal. Mona turned to him, her face flushed, a malevolent gleam in her eye. Bill was shocked at the sight of her and backed away fearfully.

It was not until after she started getting that dreadful gleam in her eye while picking a fight with Bill that he decided something would have to be done.

He turned to the Adams' family doctor, explaining the situation as best he could. Then he arranged for Mona to see the doctor, leading her to believe it was for a minor physical ailment.

The Adams' doctor was equally qualified as a psychiatrist, but after talking to Mona at great length he could only shake his head. "Sound mind, sound body," he told Bill. "I find nothing wrong with her."

In the meantime, the nightmare had continued. Mona became quite wild in her bedtime thrashings, and Bill feared that she would miscarry. It was with relief that Bill finally held his firstborn son in his arms. The delivery had been perfect and right on schedule. Perhaps now that Mona had terminated her pregnancy the nightmares would cease and peace would return to their home.

The birth of Robert Daniel Adams apparently did not impress the demon. It continued to disturb the Adams' household with unabated vigor. Bill tried to leave his family problems at home each day when he went to the print shop, but Mona's erratic behavior and continued belief in her demon became increasingly hard for him to ignore. His work began to suffer and he feared losing his job.

The situation continued on this shaky turf for another two years, when another child was born to them. Morna Sue entered a troubled home on the afternoon of March 2, 1963. Bill wondered at the wisdom in bringing a child into such a confusing environment, and he began to think seriously of bringing both the children to stay with their maternal grandmother until Mona was better.

Not long after the birth of Morna, matters became far more bleak. Mona seemed to suffer a complete split in her personality, and Bill feared that his wife had finally succumbed to paranoid schizophrenia. As "Mona," she was a good, if troubled, wife and mother, the affectionate, sensitive woman Bill had married. As "Mary" she was quarrelsome, violent, and unkempt.

"Mary" began insulting the neighbors, harassing service people, picking fights. Bill suffered much embarrassment from her public attacks in stores, restaurants, and social gatherings. Finally a sympathetic coworker persuaded Bill to have his wife committed to an institution for the insane.

His plans were thwarted. At the sanity hearing, Mona completely submerged, and "Mary" came out, showing her best side. She argued brilliantly in her own defense, and half succeeded in craftily convincing the judge that Bill had manufactured the entire thing to be rid of her. With true deviousness she managed to discredit the testimony of several of the witnesses. She even suggested that her neighbor's testimony was false because the woman had been having an affair with Bill.

With a sinking feeling in his heart, Bill listened to the judge dismiss the case. He could only hope that the judge had done the right thing, but he feared the decision could only turn to tragedy. Bill was convinced that his wife was completely insane.

Forced as he was to accept the court's ruling, Bill did not feel he had a right to so sentence his children. Sadly, he placed Robert and Morna in a children's home north of Omaha, for temporary care.

This decision proved wise for the children, but unfortunate for Mona. No longer faced with the constant strain of remaining normal in front of her children, Mona took a turn for the worse. The "Mary" personality became dominant and Bill found himself living in a nightmare.

The neighbors on the Adams' block became so antagonistic that Bill decided to quit his job and leave Omaha. He could think of nothing else to do, so Bill took Mona to her mother's house.

Mrs. Jolinsky still had younger children at home and could not care adequately for her ailing older daughter. She suggested that the two go to the Jolinsky farm. Perhaps there, away from other people, Mona would recover her health and cease to believe in the demon.

For a while this move to the country seemed to make life easier for the beleaguered couple. Bill planted a small garden and tried to be as self-sufficient as possible. Mona's condition did not improve, but somehow the situation seemed more tolerable with no other people around.

Mona insisted that the demon had followed them, and she reported frequently that it had appeared to her. Bill could not bring himself to believe in the possibility of demons and possession, and continued to believe that his wife was insane.

Throughout this whole period, Bill had never once seen the demon or heard him. He had always had to rely on Mona's word that the creature actually existed, and this he could not do.

Then, on that frightening moonlit night, he had seen with his own eyes the loathsome thing that had plagued his wife for so many years and had so tragically disrupted his life.

After witnessing the demon himself, Bill no longer believed in the learned doctors or the detailed medical texts which called his wife's tormentor a delusion. He felt as though the medical and scientific professions had abandoned him, for who in the twentieth century would actually believe that a demon was stalking their house? Bill felt there was no one for him to turn to, and the thought frightened him.

One evening, shortly after he had witnessed the demon, the Adams were spending a quiet evening at home. Bill was reading a few seed catalogues and Mona was busily sketching.

After some minutes, Mona stood up and regarded her picture. Then she crossed over to Bill and placed it in his lap without comment.

The picture was a gross caricature of Bill. Somehow Mona had pictured her husband as full of evil intent and hideous capabilities.

"Mona, what have you done?" he asked, stupefied. "This can't be me."

"Of course it's not," she replied nonchalantly. "It's the demon."

"The demon? But it can't be! I saw the demon myself and it didn't look like a man. And it didn't look like me!"

"But I told you, dear," Mona patiently explained. "It comes to me in two forms. One is of the beast you saw that night with me; the other is of a man."

"But it can't be—"

"Of course it is, darling," Mona said, a strange smile beginning to play over her lips. "He was here all the time I was drawing him. He stood right in the middle of the floor and stared at me the whole time."

The horrifying gleam had returned to her eyes. Without taking her eyes off Bill, Mona reached for the wall shelf where Bill kept a fully loaded .22 caliber rifle.

"Don't you see, Bill," she said, her face hardening, "the demon is you. That's why I have to kill you, dear. You see, I have to kill you, don't I? Because the demon left the center of the room and went straight into you."

Mona's voice started to rise. She had a wild, faraway look in her eyes. Slowly she raised the rifle, pointed it at Bill. Bill heard the click and knew that she had released the safety catch on it. Her finger tightened on the trigger.

"He couldn't get me, so he went into you. He's got you now, but I can free you. Don't worry," she soothed.

Bill stared at Mona, speechless. He felt paralyzed. He seemed to be hearing her voice from a great distance. In a mindless daze he realized that his wife was going to murder him.

Suddenly a noise on the roof diverted both of them, and Bill regained his senses. Something was walking with measured tread across the roof of the house.

"Mona!" Bill cried. "Listen!"

The unmistakable hopping, scratching sound of a bird could be heard over their heads. The utter stillness in the room only served to amplify the noise of the footsteps on the roof.

"The demon is not in me," Bill stated. "That there is a demon in our lives I do not doubt, but Mona, the demon is not in me. Listen up there! He is hovering over our heads, waiting to see what you will do.

"Don't you see what he's doing? If he appears in a form like mine, then it is to trick you into believing that I am he. He wants to turn you against me, because he knows that if I were out of the picture and

you were alone, he would have a better chance at claiming you.

"If he were able to cause you to pull that trigger he would have you! He doesn't own your body yet, but he's trying, and killing me would be all the leverage he would need."

Mona faltered. "But when I finished the drawing he walked right to you and entered into you."

"He's trying to trick you. He's not interested in me; it's you he wants. He would never try for me unless he failed utterly with you, and you know he hasn't given up on you yet. Just listen, Mona. He's not in me, he's up there, on the roof!"

Mona swung the rifle toward the ceiling and wildly jerked the trigger.

"Away with you, thou foul and loathsome creature. You are destroying my life, ruining my husband. You shall never find comfort here! Never! Never! Never!"

The bullet tore through the roof as Mona shrieked hysterically. From up on the roof there was a mad scrambling sound and the macabre noise of huge wings flapping together. Then the creature flew off into the night.

Mona stood transfixed, listening to the sound. Bill took advantage of the moment and made a lunge for the rifle. Angrily he slapped her to the floor.

"No, Bill, no," she cried. "Don't hit me."

But Bill, too, was close to the edge of hysteria. He still recalled only too clearly the sight of his wife pointing the rifle at his chest.

"You're a lunatic, Mona," he shouted at her cowering form. "You're crazy, crazy!"

"Oh, God," Mona sobbed, "you're right. What is going to become of me?"

Bill glared at her, his body trembling. Then he strode away from her, not answering. He grabbed a blanket from the bed and stalked out of the house. The cramped quarters of a car would be a bed of roses compared to a bed shared with a murdering lunatic.

Bill hunched up in the car, reviewing the shambles of his marriage, the fact of his children growing up among strangers. What had happened to Mona? Had she been living in an imaginary world of the sinister side of the occult and become trapped by it? Had he been just as unrealistic by letting her get away with it?

He thought back to his proposal of marriage and pondered anew her cryptic acceptance. Had Mona been playing dramatic games, selling herself a line about "bad karma" and filling her head with exotic baleful predictions? Had she ever really loved him, or had she made him a character in her bizarre secret world?

The demon had first come to her when she was pregnant with Robert. Had she realized her error then, or become resentful of him for cluttering up her imaginery world with a very real baby and its inherent responsibilities?

But Bill, too, had seen the demon, and he had heard the flapping noise as something had taken off from the roof. Could it be that a demon was truly trying to possess her? Had her ignorant dabblings in the occult attracted some fiend to her, eager for a fleshly portal into the physical world? That vile thing! He thought again of its hideous visage and shuddered.

No, he could not accept simple insanity as the answer. He had to admit to himself that some ghastly denizen from another realm of reality had, daggerlike, brutally plunged itself between them, and would not leave them until either the demon won, or Mona died.

A sound outside the car distracted Bill from his thoughts.

"Bill, let me in there with you."

It was Mona, shivering with cold. Her face was streaked with tears.

"Leave me alone," Bill told her. "I need to think."

"Please, Bill, I'm afraid when I'm alone in the house."

"I don't want to be killed. Go away."

Mona began to cry softly. Bill ignored her as best he could, but the pathetic figure would not leave. Finally he opened the car door and she gratefully crawled in with him. Still weeping, she curled into his arms. Bill did not close his eyes until he was sure that she was sleeping.

The next morning the Adamses hastily packed all their belongings and shoved them roughly in the car. As they headed towards the Jolinskys, Mona seemed to guess what was on Bill's mind. She cuddled against his side and kept her gaze away from his. When they stopped for a snack, she clutched his hand, and would not relinquish it until they were back in the car.

Halfway to her mother's house, Mona curled up on the front seat and laid her head in Bill's lap. Hot tears fell slowly on his thigh, and Bill was so overcome he had to pull over and stop the car.

When they arrived at the Jolinskys Bill jumped out of the vehicle and quickly unloaded all of Mona's personal belongings, as well as all the household goods. He had not told her his plan, but Mona seemed to know, regardless.

Without having said a word, Bill slid behind the driver's seat once more, leaving his wife standing on the porch, her goods stacked around her. As he drove off the tears fell freely down his cheeks. A glance through the rearview window showed Mona standing on the porch, gallantly waving goodbye. Her face held a look of desolation and despair impossible to describe. It seemed to Bill, though, that a human should not be able to feel such pain and still live.

Two and a half months later Bill received a letter from his mother-in-law. Mona had been legally declared insane and placed under a doctor's supervision at a state mental hospital. Bill called Mrs. Jolinsky immediately, and the two shared their mutual grief over the telephone.

Bill Adams is a sober, subdued man. He works quietly and diligently, rears his children as best he can. He never stops hoping that someday the demon will release Mona, and she will be able to come home to him, happy.

THE MARAUDING SPIRIT WHO STOLE A TEENAGER'S BODY

"Hey, Yusef!" the well-dressed Arab called from a corner cafe. "Come join us."

Yusef Pundit turned and smiled, recognizing his friends. As he stolled over to them, Yusef could not help wishing his father were less strict about his fraternizing with these wealthy young men.

"Say, Yusef," the same man who had hailed him remarked when Yusef was seated with the others, "the fellows and I are going out drinking tonight. Why don't you join us?"

The young man stared at Pundit with the beginnings of a sardonic smile forming about his lips. "Or maybe you're afraid, like your father, that bad boys like us will drive the devils into you."

The man let out a short laugh and punched Yusef playfully on the shoulder. "How about it, boys?" he called, including the circle of friends with an expansive sweep of his arm. "Shall we drive the devils of drink into poor Yusef?"

The others laughed jovially, and Yusef joined them, a little nervously. Then in a voice a bit too loud he declared: "Well, then, we had better start now, friends. It will take a score of devils to shake my father's religion out of me."

"Well said," the others cried, as they rose from their chairs and prepared to commence with the evening's enterprise.

In the meantime, Yusef's parents waited anxiously for their son to return from school.

The elder Pundit had managed to amass quite a fortune in his lifetime, but he had come by it slowly. He had begun as a cloth salesclerk and finally became prosperous as a cloth merchant of Dacca. All his life, though, Pundit had been a devoted follower of Islam, and he wished his son to be similarly devout. As a consequence, the rather strict elder man usually forbade Yusef to see the sons of other prominent businessmen of Dacca. These young men, the anxious father felt, were lazy playboys, who, because they had never had to work for money, did not understand its true value. The easy accessibility of spending cash seemed to encourage vice rather than religious fervor, and the "playboy" sons were often out drinking, gambling, and mixing with Western women. This behavior Pundit scorned, yet he feared his son, Yusef, might find it only too attractive.

As the hours dragged by and Yusef did not return, Pundit felt his anxiety turn to anger. Where could the boy be? As Abdul Pundit paced the room with mounting fury, his wife, Yolanda, became increasingly nervous.

"Abdul, why do you pace, so?" she queried. "Yusef will return."

"I know he will return," Abdul replied grimly. "It is how he will return that concerns me. He'll be full of drink, no doubt."

The angry man slammed his fist against a wall. "I told him not to go about with those irresponsible boys. I tell him to read and study the Koran, to study

the lives of the caliphs, always to walk with Allah in his heart, and what does he do? He goes out drinking. Drinking! How can he have the nerve to enter the mosque after such behavior?"

"Abdul," his wife replied, eager to placate her furious husband, "Yusef is only eighteen. He is at the age when it is hard to resist the temptation to rebel, hard to resist the pressures of his friends. Be easy on him, please. And you must be easy on yourself, too. Look, it is time for bed and your blood is so stirred you will not be able to sleep."

"Don't you worry. I shall sleep. But tomorrow, when I awaken, I'll get that boy. I will teach Yusef a lesson in obedience he will never forget."

After that threatening utterance, Abdul Pundit stalked grimly to his bedroom.

Yolanda Pundit glanced down at her husband, who lay in fitful slumber. The house was still, yet she strained her ears for the slightest sound, the slightest indication that Yusef had returned home. The woman had found herself unable to sleep. She feared for her son's safety, and she feared more for her husband's anger in the morning. What would he do to Yusef to teach him a "lesson he would never forget?" Mme. Pundit hoped that by intercepting Yusef that night, she could prepare him for his father's wrath in the morning.

Mme. Pundit had just risen to a more comfortable sitting position when she thought she heard muffled footsteps in the next room. As noiselessly as possible, she slipped from her bed and made her way to the front of the house. A thin crack of light was visible from behind the bathroom door, and Mme. Pundit indulged in a moment's righteous satisfaction at the thought of her son paying for his disobedience with stomach illness. Tactfully, she decided to leave him alone.

A half hour later, however, the bathroom door—which had been locked from the inside—still had not swung open. Perhaps Yusef was suffering from more than temporary nausea.

"Yusef," Mme. Pundit said softly through the door, "is there anything the matter? You have been in there for a long time. Come out, I want to talk to you."

Mme. Pundit listened carefully for a response, but there was none.

"Yusef?" she called once more in a low undertone. "You can come out. If you are drunk I won't tell your father, but you must come to bed now."

Again she listened carefully for a response. What she heard nearly caused the poor woman to faint.

"You idiot woman," cried a woman's voice from within the bathroom. "I don't give a damn what this kid's father thinks. It might have concerned him, but it sure as hell doesn't concern me."

"Yusef," Mme. Pundit barely whispered.

"Yusef," the voice on the other side of the door mimicked. "Lady, you haven't got a 'Yusef' anymore, so don't call me that again. And don't call me your son either, because I am definitely not your son." The person in the bathroom started to chuckle obscenely, then she burst into deep guffaws of devilish merriment.

"You might say I'm your daughter," the voice uttered, immensely amused at the idea. "After all, I am using your son's body. Oh, this is hilarious," she tittered. "A girl in a boy's body. Oh, the very idea of it!"

The creature in the bathroom went into peals of

laughter, and each cadence acted as the stinging slap in Mme. Pundit's face. With a sob of horror Mme. Pundit tore herself away from the bathroom door and fled to her sleeping husband's side.

"Abdul! Abdul!" she cried, violently shaking him by the shoulders. "A terrible thing has happened. Yusef is possessed by a devil, and the devil is a woman. In the name of Allah what can we do?"

Abdul Pundit awakened with a start and stared with disbelieving eyes at his distraught wife. "What is this nonsense?" he inquired. "Yolanda, calm yourself! Tell me what has frightened you."

Mme. Pundit gulped for air desperately, then gradually calmed her heaving shoulders. In a voice low with horror she repeated to her husband what she had just heard.

"You are being very foolish, woman," Abdul admonished her. "You must have had a bad dream caused by your concern for Yusef."

Mme. Pundit did not reply, but clutched her face and wept silently into her hands. Pundit softened.

"Come with me," he said gently, taking her by the arm, "and I will show you that there is no terrible person in the bathroom."

As the two made their way to the front of the house, the malicious-sounding laughter again rang throughout the house. Pundit glanced quickly down at his wife and hastened toward the bathroom door.

"Who is in there?" Pundit demanded to know. "Come out of there immediately or I shall have you arrested!"

The only response was another roar of laughter.

"This is a vicious joke," Pundit muttered to his wife. "We will not stand for it."

He raised his voice and addressed the person on the other side of the door.

"Come out at once or I shall break down the door!"

Still the laughter did not stop and the handle of the door did not turn.

"Stand back, Yolanda."

Pundit threw the weight of his body against the bathroom door and crashed into the small room. He had expected to see some vulgar street woman staring at him, but instead he found himself staring directly into the eyes of his only son.

"Oh, this is all really too funny," Yusef said in a woman's voice. "This is wonderful!"

"Yusef, what has happened to you?"

The creature stopped chuckling and stared coldly at Pundit. "Listen, you ignorant old man, I am not Yusef. I don't know where that mealymouthed kid is, and I don't care. I've got this body now, and I'm not going to give it up, so you just forget about ever having had a son."

The creature cocked its head to one side and raised an eyebrow, waiting for a challenge. When it saw the look of fear on Pundit's face, its expression changed to a hideous grin, and once again the evil laughter reverberated throughout the house.

The next morning the Pundits took their son to Dr. Mueller, a prominent psychiatrist of Dacca. Dr. Mueller interviewed Yusef, Yolanda, and Abdul, separately. At the conclusion of these discussions he called the anxious parents into his private office.

Yusef had suffered a nervous breakdown, the doctor explained. It was apparent that the teenager had experienced tremendous guilt upon breaking the laws of his religion and disobeying his father. Fearful of Abdul's rage, Yusef had fled a confrontation altogether and created a substitute personality.

It was Dr. Mueller's belief that Yusef's breakdown was simple enough to diagnose and treat. He ordered the young man sent to a private asylum in Dacca, then assured the Pundits that all would soon be well with their son.

Yusef stayed at the asylum for two months without responding to treatment. The Pundits sadly decided that psychiatry was not the answer, and brought their son back home. They were now convinced that he was, indeed, possessed.

Yusef had not long been home when a curious thing happened. A local sage visited the beleaguered family and asked to speak with the woman inhabiting Yusef's body.

He had not been conversing with the woman long before the sage excitedly interrupted the Pundits. He told them that he had made an interesting discovery.

While trying to persuade the uncooperative woman to talk with him, he had heard her mutter something in ancient Arabic, or Egyptian. The ancient tongue was well-known to the man, and he immediately began asking her questions in her native tongue. At last she agreed to tell him her story.

"I lived on the earth hundreds of years ago, and I was happy to be alive. The sun felt good on my body and my feet enjoyed the feel of damp earth beneath them.

"Then, at the age of eighteen, I died. I felt cruelly robbed, for before my death I had been eager to live a full life of experience and adventure. I refused to accept the verdict of the gods and sought immediately to enter another body.

"I did not want to occupy an old body, one that had already experienced much and was ready to die. I wanted a young body, so that I would have a long span of years ahead of me. I wanted to touch with hands, see with physical eyes, hear, smell, and feel again the things I had delighted in while still living.

"I had wandered for a very long time when I came upon the soul lodged in this boy's body. He was just the age I had been when I died, and he was healthy. Also, I could see that his soul was not anchored firmly within its physical form, for it had been loosened with drink and fear of his father's wrath. I was greedy for life again, so I entered, forcefully. The boy struggled only a short time, for I was the stronger. Once inside the body, I was almost insane with delirium. To flex the fingers of a hand again, to feel hair brushing lightly across my forehead.

"Yusef's parents were so foolish when they found me. They refused to believe what had happened and persisted in calling me their son. I, female, and a son, too! I could only laugh, and the laughter felt so good after so many centuries of silence."

The sage undertook to counsel the girl after hearing her story.

"It is not right for you to have taken the body that rightfully belongs to another. Allah came for you because it was your time to quit your earthly existence. It is wrong to fight the wishes of Allah. For your sake as much as for Yusef's, you must follow the will of Allah and return this body to its rightful owner."

"Never!" the demon cried, an ugly tone creeping into her voice. "I wrestled for this body, sought it for centuries. It is mine! I will never give it up!"

The Pundits were encouraged by this successful attempt at communicating with the usurper of their

son's body, but despondent upon learning of her stubborn refusal to vacate the body.

"Do not despair," the sage told them. "There is a woman living twenty miles outside of Dacca. She is a wise woman, a witch, and she possesses many strange and wonderful powers. If she cannot cast this girl's spirit from your son's body, no one can. Call on her, and see if she will help you."

The Pundits were eager to do anything that would restore their son to his body. Without delay they contacted the woman and arranged for her to travel to their home in Dacca.

The first thing the woman did when she arrived was to draw a large circle around Yusef, who was seated in the center of the room. Though this circle was made only of chalk the invading spirit could not force Yusef's body to step outside it, no matter how hard she tried. Sensing that she was about to be ousted, the Egyptian girl began to curse everyone present in vile terms.

The witch addressed the demon in modern Arabic, ordering it to leave in the name of Allah. This brought on a torrent of rage from the possessing entity, but the witch continued, unperturbed.

Following this preliminary stage of the exorcism, the witch dipped into her arcane lore and began assaulting the demon in more esoteric ways. She chanted softly in an unknown tongue, gradually increasing her volume.

The witch's voice grew strong and authoritative. Her incantations filled the room, drowning out the hideous shrieks and hysterical sobs of the demon. Suddenly the girl's voice rang out.

"No! No! I shall never leave this body. Never!"

No sooner had she uttered those words than she jerked upright and fell upon the floor. She flailed wildly, as though having a seizure, and shuddered and writhed upon the floor. Saliva foamed at the corners of her trembling lips, and the Pundits were horror-stricken with the thought that their son would die. Abdul Pundit was ready to stride through the circle, but the sage restrained him.

"It is horrible, I know," he whispered, "but it will soon be over."

A single agonized scream pierced the air and the writhing body lay still.

"Your son has returned to his body," the old woman stated simply.

No sound, no movement issued forth from the inert body on the floor. Mme. Pundit took a tentative step in the direction of her son, then stopped, afraid.

"Wait for just a few seconds more," the witch assured her, "then your son will awaken as if from a deep sleep."

The old woman scarcely had time to complete her sentence when the young man's body stirred. Pundit and his wife stared with disbelief, then joy, as their son sat up, rubbed his eyes dazedly, and spoke in his own natural voice.

"What has happened? Why am I here on the floor? Father, forgive me, but this afternoon when I stopped to chat with those fellows I did not intend to go drinking."

POSSESSED BY HER UNCLE FOR THIRTY YEARS

Young Teri Vruche lay in bed, restless and unable to sleep. She was twenty-two years old and soon to be married. Naturally, then, her thoughts were of her husband-to-be and the years of married life stretching before them.

At the same time, though, she could not dismiss from her mind thoughts of her Uncle Sandor, recently and quite suddenly deceased. Uncle Sandor had been a pleasure-loving man, unmindful of his prayers and synagogue duties. Teri was troubled for her Uncle Sandor's soul.

As the girl lay in bed reviewing these things, she suddenly became aware of a strange creeping sensation covering her entire body. Teri lay still, her eyes widening with growing fear, while her ankles swelled beyond recognition. With horror she noticed that her body was ballooning out of shape.

Hungarian-born Teri was at a loss as to what was happening to her, and she was badly frightened. She struggled mentally with her fear, realizing that she had to do something about her condition. Then the voice spoke to her.

"Teri, it is I, Uncle Sandor. Teri, listen, you've got to help me. You were always my favorite and now you must help me."

In a desperate tone the voice continued to explain to the girl that his hedonism while in the flesh had robbed him of eternal rest. Sandor had discovered, though, that Teri's strict adherence to her faith and its many laws had put her in good stead with those "above."

"You must share your good deeds with me," the spirit pleaded, "so that I can gain forgiveness and enter the Eternal Rest."

Teri Vruche closed her eyes in a state of shock paralysis. She could not scream, she could not start, she could only realize slowly that she was being possessed by a dybbuk, a demon of the kind she had often heard about in the old country. This was the Bronx, though, and Teri shuddered to think that the whole bizarre sequence that had just passed could be possible.

That initial contact was in 1931. For thirty years thereafter, until February 18, 1961, Teri Vruche Goldenberg was plagued with a demon claiming to be her own Uncle Sandor. The dybbuk was present in Mrs. Goldenberg throughout her married life and the rearing of her children. She was a widowed grandmother before the exorcism rites were pronounced that banished forever the obsessive spirit from her presence.

According to East European beliefs, a dybbuk is a demon—the soul of a restless and sinful person, which, after the death of its own body, seeks refuge in the body of a still-living, God-fearing person. According to ancient folk beliefs, the dybbuk resides in its human host, hoping that the good deeds practiced by the possessed person will atone for the grave sins committed by the contrite sinner.

The presence of a dybbuk is intolerable to the unfortunate host, for he or she is in the impossible position of supporting two souls with his or her actions. It is believed that only a great rabbi, who is also one of the Hasid, can exorcise the unwanted spirit.

Mrs. Goldenberg suffered for three decades before she was able to find a Hasid (literally, "devout") of the Kabbalistic school to rid her of her demon. In that time the dybbuk never ceased petitioning the harassed woman for sanctuary. It implored her to desist from asking for the rites of exorcism, for only through her, it stated, could it hope to find peace.

Every night for thirty years Mrs. Goldenberg's inner ear rang with the demon's incessant pleas. It employed a number of tactics. Some evenings it would try to coax, or persuade. Other evenings it would curse Mrs. Goldenberg, speak cruelly to her and hint darkly at the fate awaiting her if she did not help it.

If Mrs. Goldenberg were particularly stubborn, the demon would retaliate by causing her eyes to smart to such a degree that she suffered temporary blindness. Other times, the demon would cause intense stomach pains. Then, while Mrs. Goldenberg lay doubled up in an agony of pain the dybbuk would whisper insidiously that she would never find a moment's peace if she did not allow it to stay within her, "or if you do not agree to share with me all your rewards from above."

Mrs. Goldenberg staunchly refused to give in to the demon, but she was not rewarded for her steadfastness until after her fiftieth birthday. It was in this latter period that the by-now extremely religious lady came under the spiritual guidance of Rabbi Salamon Friedlander.

Rabbi Friedlander is a remarkable man, revered throughout the Jewish diaspora as a miracle rabbi, or *Admore*. The word *Admore* is a contraction of the

Hebrew for "our master, our teacher, our rabbi" and it confers upon anyone so titled the honor of being the highest religious authority in all of Hasidism. According to the Kabbala, the name given to the mystical literature of centuries of Judaism, the powers of the *Admore* descend in a pure line from Moses, who was first given this title by God Himself.

Only a rabbi of this stature is deemed capable of ridding a possessed person from a dybbuk. Therefore, it was to Rabbi Friedlander that Mrs. Goldenberg finally brought her story of thirty-one years of torment.

Rabbi Friedlander studied all the astrological data, as is given within the Kabbala. At length his study revealed that the morning of February 18, 1961, at precisely 6:30 A.M. would be the most propitious hour to begin the long rites of exorcism.

Mrs. Goldenberg, tense and visibly nervous, arrived punctually at the Lisker Congregation Synagogue. She quietly took her place before the Holy Ark which contains the sacred Torah.

Attendance of the exorcism was strictly limited to Mrs. Goldenberg, Rabbi Friedlander, and a group of ten elders of the synagogue, called a *minyan*.

Prior to the actual exorcism rites, the rabbi had followed a carefully delineated plan of preparation and consecration of himself to the task. This preparation had included a nine-day fast from "all unworthy and sensual things," and a three-day fast from all food.

The actual ceremony began when Rabbi Friedlander solemly donned a special long white robe, and in a low, mellifluous voice, began to chant an esoteric prayer. The *minyan* joined their rabbi in prayer while Mrs. Goldenberg shuddered under a white shawl especially designed for the ritual. All light in the synagogue came from the muted glow of thirty-six black candles.

After the introductory prayer, Rabbi Friedlander reverentially approached the Ark. After giving thanks for the privilege of touching the sacred scroll containing the Torah, the Rabbi removed the holy writings from the Ark. Then, speaking in Hebrew and holding aloft these Books of the Law, Rabbi Friedlander began his exorcism of the devil.

"Hear me, O thou stubborn and unlawful spirit," he called forth loudly. "I order you to depart from this woman's body, and go in peace from whence you came. Go, now, and peace be with you!" the rabbi thundered.

As the rabbi closed his mouth the cantor stepped forward with the *shofar*, which is a ram's horn blown to symbolize the last trumpet which the Old Testament states is the herald of resurrection. The cantor held the horn in his left hand, then raised it to his lips and blew nine times into it. After each blast the rabbi and the ten elders chanted in unison, "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

The rabbi's voice towered above those of the others gathered. "I command thee to leave, thou sinful and unclean soul. Depart at once from this tormented body. Hearken unto me or I shall have to excommunicate you, to your utter disgrace. Go now in peace."

The *minyan* answered "Amen" and the cantor blew upon the shofar ten more times.

This entire process outlined so far was repeated nine times, and each time the emotional intensity crescendoed.

Throughout this display, the dybbuk remained unimpressed. The rabbi chanted, the *minyan* prayed, the cantor blew the *shofar*, but the dybbuk was silent.

Rabbi Friedlander was undaunted. Putting yet more power into his voice he called upon mightier powers than he against the resisting spirit. Even so, there was no response.

"I curse thee by the name of God, and by my sacred work. I hereby order thee to render me the submission that must be given to thy Maker!" the Rabbi swore, vehemently.

Still the dybbuk was silent.

With a sudden, dramatic move, Rabbi Friedlander moved three steps back from the Holy Ark. The tendons in his arm stretched violently as he held the Torah as high above his head as his reach would allow. In a voice of supernatural strength he called forth once more:

"May every curse and every ban in the Chapter of Curses fall on thee if thou dost not immediately forsake the body and soul of our beloved sister, Teri Vruche Goldenberg!"

"Amen!" cried the elders, as the rabbi swept into a recitation of the ninety-first Psalm. Again the synagogue echoed with nine blasts from the *shofar*, followed by seven more.

The voices and trumpet blasts had been swirling round the synagogue, but now, for the first time, the room was drenched in ghastly silence. As if coming out of a trance, Mrs. Goldenberg slowly opened her eyes and shook her head gently. A great sigh of release escaped her lips.

"The Lord be praised!" she cried. "I am free!"

In an overwhelming surge of emotion, Mrs. Goldenberg rushed to Rabbi Friedlander and prostrated herself at his feet.

With tears streaming down his face, Rabbi Friedlander lovingly kissed the Torah and returned it

to its sacred resting place. Then he removed himself to his own private sanctum to pray and to regain his spent energy.

Renewed study of the Kabbalah by Rabbi Friedlander revealed to him that the dybbuk of Uncle Sandor had "repented of his sins and the Holy One had granted him shelter in the Eternal Rest."

Upon this announcement, the *Zidduk Ha-Din* was recited, which is the prayer for acknowledgment of divine justice and usually intoned only at burials.

Mrs. Goldenberg, for the first time in thirty-one years, slept peacefully that night, uninterrupted by her demon's callings.

TORTURED POSSESSION BETWEEN TWO OPPOSING FORCES

A struggle between "black" and "white" spirits within a sixteen-year-old Indiana farm girl confounded the girl's doctor and seriously threatened to destroy her.

The case of Charlotte Werner is a remarkable example of conscious, personal survival after death, for it details the lives of two persons, long since deceased, who through the entranced body of Charlotte relayed information which no one present knew, and which was later verified.

Charlotte lived with her parents, three brothers and a sister on a mid-size farm about two hours' drive south of Indianapolis. She and her siblings were third-generation Americans. Their grandfather had emmigrated from Germany in the early twentieth century to settle in the Indiana farm country. Charlotte's father, Joseph, born and reared on the farm, liked the idea of a small, family-run farm, and worked to see that it was a profitable operation. A strict German Lutheran, he reared his family in his faith, at the same time preserving an authoritarian control of the Werner home.

One day in June of 1962, shortly after beginning her summer vacation from school, Charlotte went to the barn on an errand for her mother. While there, she noticed that the cows' tails were all neatly braided together.

The girl ran back to the house, calling to her mother. "Come to the barn with me, I want to show you something!" she called.

Mrs. Werner and her daughter stood quizzically behind the cows, wondering who would take the trouble to braid their tails. They finally decided it had to be the work of the younger children.

When the other children returned from the neighbors for lunch, Charlotte and her mother queried them about the cows' tails.

"We didn't have anything to do with it," twelve-year-old Charles said earnestly.

Mrs. Werner raised one eyebrow.

"Honestly, Mom, we didn't. I don't know who could have done it."

The matter was dropped, unsolved. It did not occur to any of the Werners at this time that anyone other than a human agent could have been responsible for the strange incident.

The next morning the cows' tails were again braided together, though, and Joseph Werner expressed his alarm.

"I'm going to sit up tonight and keep an eye on the barn," he announced. "That way I'm bound to find out what's going on—or scare off anyone who wants to try more of this funny business."

That night, and for several weeks afterward, a close watch was kept on the entire barnyard, and though nothing was spotted during this time, the cows' tails were discovered braided every morning. It was as though invisible hands were gathering the three strands of tails and interweaving them together.

The family was still stymied by the phenomenon of

the cows' tails when Charlotte experienced something that added another dimension to the nuisance in the barn. While standing with her father, Charlotte sustained a severe blow on the left side of her head which sent her sprawling. Her father, who witnessed the entire incident, did not see anything near his daughter at the time. Again, invisible hands appeared to be at work.

From this point the family was convinced that pranksters had nothing to do with the strange happenstances, but that some supernatural force was somehow responsible. Different members of the Werner family began observing strange birds and cats entering and leaving the barn, and a number of other inexplicable circumstances. Charlotte seemed most susceptible to these strange phenomena.

The little animals were seen with increasing severity and frequency when yet another dimension of the disturbance opened up before the family. An incendiary spirit seemed to have been conjured up, for inexplicable fires broke out in the barn, frightening the already puzzled family a great deal, and raising the concern of nearby neighbors.

Almost a year after the cows' tails had been braided for the first time, the phenomena had still not ceased. It had, in fact, continued to become much worse. On the anniversary of the inception of the phenomena, Charlotte and her brothers were cleaning out a section of the barn. Suddenly a bright, strong flame shot up from the floor. With the help of neighbors the fire was extinguished, but no one could ascertain the cause of the conflagration.

Within the next few days fires broke out in several places in the house, eventually necessitating the removal of all household goods into the yard. Yet, even with a close vigil kept by the family and neighbors, small fires continued to start in the house.

One evening, shortly after supper, Charlotte, her father, and a brother were in the barn. All at once a slightly luminescent figure appeared before the girl. This figure was described by Charlotte as a gray, shadowy woman who spoke to her in a faraway voice.

The shadowy woman had come with a message for Charlotte: "Remove the house, remove the house. If the house is not removed before the fifth day of March, next year, great misfortune will befall you."

The woman told Charlotte that the fires the family had been battling had been sent by an evil spirit, one who intended to do the family harm.

"I can warn you of this evil one, but I cannot protect you from his influence. I will be powerless against him should the house stand after the fifth of March.

"You must promise that the house will be destroyed," the spirit pleaded.

"I promise," Charlotte answered breathlessly.

Joseph and Charles Werner both heard the ethereal figure's voice, but could not distinguish its words. Neither one saw the apparition.

Charlotte communicated many times with the spirit after this initial contact. Through these many conversations a number of biographical facts were brought to light.

The spirit claimed to be a Roman Catholic nun, born in Maryland in 1819. She was convent-educated and then forced by her religiously zealous family to become a nun. She and other sisters were later sent to Indiana to work with the settlers in the territory.

During this time the nun was bound, in a manner she would not reveal, to a "black spirit." The black spirit was intent on harming the Werner family, the woman related, and it was her intention to foil this evil being. The nun sadly confessed to many crimes committed on earth while under the influence of this negative spirit, for which she was extremely contrite. While she did not delineate her crimes, she indicated that she had paid heavily for them.

Charlotte developed great affection for this spirit, which she named the "white spirit."

One Sunday in the fall of 1963 all of the Werners except Charlotte attended church. She remained at home to prepare the Sunday dinner, as guests were expected.

The girl was stirring a sauce for the ham when she was startled by a loud explosion in the barn. Before she could run to investigate, however, she was shocked to see a large number of bizarre-looking yellow frogs materialize near the sink.

Charlotte was intrigued by the little animals and bent to pick one up, but a voice which seemed to come from below the kitchen floor stopped her.

"Charlotte, let go of the frogs," it said. At once the frogs disappeared.

Charlotte returned thoughtfully to the sauce on the stove, disturbed by the incident. She had scarcely time to pick up the spoon when a strange sound from behind her caused the girl to whirl around.

A monstrous-looking creature with hideous fangs stood there. Charlotte uttered a shriek and ran into the living room. As she ran she heard taunting laughter follow her. Charlotte spun around again and this time beheld a griffin-like creature ogling her. Again, the mocking laughter echoed in her ears.

In the next few moments Charlotte was forced to endure an onslaught of terror. Cursing voices and evil laughter resounded about her and hideous-looking creatures chased her throughout the house. After what seemed an interminable length of time, the ghastly beings and frightening voices faded. Charlotte was again alone.

It was during the next week that the "black spirit" first approached Charlotte. She was walking home from school when she was accosted by the shadowy form.

"What does the nun want when she comes to you," the entity demanded to know. "You should not speak to her anymore. You should speak with me only, because I can give you the key to the cellar in your house. There are eight bottles of wine there, and many rich things."

With this he laughed contemptuously and disappeared.

For several days thereafter this menacing apparition would appear to Charlotte as she walked through the fields or down the road from the bus stop. She was subjected to continual harassment.

The being, which appeared always in monk's garb, claimed to be of the Franciscan order. He mocked Charlotte's father as a Bible-toting fool; he urged her to speak the Mass, as he claimed it was infinitely better than her Lutheran service; and he derided her for resisting his Catholic evangelism. He threatened her with vile and cruel things should she not stop conversing with "that bag of bones," which he called the female spirit.

Throughout this harassment Charlotte remained strong. She refused to acknowledge him or to speak to him. The white spirit steadfastly stood by her.

At times the monk attempted to imitate the voices of her family members or friends, hoping to fool

Charlotte into speaking to him, but Charlotte always seemed to know when he was disguising his voice, and she never replied to him.

The black spirit could predict the future with accuracy, and once, in an attempt to prove his friendship, he promised Charlotte a sack of money. The next day, as Charlotte and her sister Barbara were working in the barnyard, a small brown paper sack fell at their feet. Opening it, they discovered quite a large bit of currency. They counted nearly fifty dollars in singles, fives, and tens, and a few dollars more in coins.

Later that afternoon Charlotte's white spirit came to her and advised her not to keep this money, as it was a gift from the black monk.

"If you refuse his gift," the white spirit told her, "other money will be given to you. Why not buy a hymn book with it?"

The next day Charlotte and her father drove to the nearest town and donated the black spirit's money to charity. While still in town they were approached by one of the town's leading businessmen.

"Aren't you the girl we've been hearing so much about?" he inquired.

"Yes, I am, "Charlotte replied.

The businessman then gave her a small sum of money, which Charlotte used to purchase a hymn book.

The black spirit was so intent on his goal of severing Charlotte's relationship with the white spirit that it continued to make the unhappy girl's life a terror. He created horrible beasts to pursue her and insidious voices that menaced her wherever she went. These phenomena were so terrifying that Charlotte would frequently fall into a cataleptic trance, lying immovable for sometimes four or five hours. During this period she could not be roused. Her family noted that while these attacks lasted, Charlotte's left side was often freezing cold, while her right side retained its normal warmth. The pupils of her eyelids turned inwards.

Was it possible that both entities were possessing her at the same time, polarizing her body between them? The left side seemed adversely possessed, while the right side appeared to exert a balancing influence over the entire body.

During these seizures Charlotte would strike out violently if anyone approached her. Her left arm and leg either moved up and down or was extended to strike continuously.

Charlotte's voice was always harsh and masculine-sounding, very similar to the black monk's.

The seizures always ended with a violent struggle between her left and right sides.

Upon awakening, her only memory was of attending church, and singing and praying with a congregation.

Charlotte's terrified parents were forced to stand by helplessly and watch their daughter undergo this agony. Any attempts they made to ameliorate her condition resulted in a resounding blow from her left arm or leg. Finally, the Werners called in nearby doctors and clergymen.

All who examined the afflicted girl were shocked at her condition, but unable to render her any assistance.

Her minister asked Charlotte to describe what happened to her while under trance and the girl tried her best to explain.

"Just before the attacks a black and horrible monster comes to me and places his cold hand on the back

of my neck. Then I remember no more, but seem somehow to be singing in a church."

Often during the seizures Charlotte could be heard to cry out: "It's the black spirit who is attacking me!"

To the physicians in attendance she would roll her head from side to side and her eyes would fill with tears. "You can do me no good," she would tell them. "I am not sick, so there is nothing you can do for me. No doctor can help me."

Once, as she was emerging from a particularly violent attack, Charlotte was asked if there was anyone who could help her.

"The white spirit already helps me," she replied.

The attacks of the black spirit had been growing increasingly violent. At this time, the white spirit came to Charlotte and told her that the black spirit must, for a short time only, completely possess the girl's body.

"During these times, however, I will lead you to a safe place," the white spirit assured her.

After this message, the attacks excelled all previous ones in their violence and frequency. At any time of the day or night Charlotte would see the monk's outline, all in black, and she would know he had come to possess her once more. She never was able to see the monk's face.

"Will you never speak to me?" the black spirit asked Charlotte relentlessly. "If you do not, I will plague you forever. There will be no escaping me."

Charlotte steadfastly resisted. Then she would feel the icy fingers at the back of her neck. The monk would approach her left side and that would be the last she would remember.

These attacks continued for a period of five months. Eventually the Werner family decided that, all financial considerations aside, they would have to dismantle the house, as the white spirit had asked. Joseph Werner was ready to do anything to release his daughter from her daily torment.

On March 4, 1964, as the house was being torn down, the white spirit, garbed in radiant white robes, entranced Charlotte and spoke through her lips.

"I was seduced by the monk now tormenting Charlotte," she explained in a mellifluous voice. "While under his evil influence I aided him in his many crimes. Since then, however, I have suffered decades of anguish. Through penitence and faith, Christ has given me a release."

The white spirit offered a prayer of thanks to Jesus and blessing to those gathered around the entranced girl, and left Charlotte's body.

As soon as the white spirit had left, Charlotte moaned in agony. "Here he comes again," she cried pitifully.

The black spirit then possessed Charlotte's body, remaining there for a day and a half. During this time Charlotte ate no food and drank no water. The body did not sleep, but the black spirit kept it animated by speaking aloud to the large crowd of neighbors who had gathered. The black spirit answered many questions concerning the early history of Indiana and of the nature of the afterlife.

The black spirit informed the Werners that their home and barn rested on what had been a Catholic settlement a hundred years before. A local historian later acknowledged this to be true. The Werners confessed themselves to be ignorant of this fact, and stated that they were certain Charlotte, too, was unaware of it.

While the destruction of the Werner house was being undertaken, Charlotte was removed to a neighboring farm. There she spoke excitedly of the work as it was progressing, detailing each step of the way what was happening at the Werner farm. All this data was later correlated and found to be correct. All the time, Charlotte conversed in the deep masculine voice she had acquired from the monk.

The workmen back at the Werner house had already succeeded in tearing down the walls and beams of the house and were busily digging up the cellar. Deep below the house they discovered an old piece of masonry under which they found a large, dried well, filled with trash.

At the exact moment of the discovery of the well, Charlotte Werner awoke from her trance. She was surprised to find herself in the living room of a neighbor's farm. The unearthing of the monk's secret cache seemed to break the connection between them, and Charlotte was never again bothered by the marauding spirit.

Charlotte Werner returned to normal within a short period of time, resuming her customary activities. For several months, however, she continued to be upset by the entire series of events. She has not experienced any additional phenomena since her bizarre adolescent affair with possessing spirits of the dead.

SOCRATES WAS POSSESSED

Socrates, the celebrated sage of ancient Athens, fully believed he was possessed by a demon. His devotion to it was constant; never once did he stray from its counsel. His "daimon," as he called it, influenced his life, his thoughts, and his teachings, by manifesting as a voice which offered advice and warnings. This voice was so strong a force within him that he chose death rather than denounce it.

The Athenian philosopher, affirmed the wisest man in Greece by the Greek oracle at Delphi, possessed the psychic ability known as monition. Monition is guidance, warning or direction given by what the ancients called a familiar spirit. In later times it has been referred to as a demon or guardian angel, but it is generally acknowledged today to be a higher thought manifestation of the person who claims the ability. At its highest level, the phenomenon of monition is believed to be a function of the superconscious mind, acting through the subconscious mind. At its lowest level this kind of ESP is commonly referred to as a "hunch."

Socrates' daimon is one of history's most thoroughly documented cases of monition. The philosopher-teacher and spiritual leader trusted his daimon implicitly, and the daimon rewarded him by never failing in guidance.

The voice through which Socrates' daimon spoke was always one of restraint. It never encouraged him toward taking any action, only discouraged him when he proposed something unfavorable to himself or others.

Socrates always obeyed his voice, never going against his "divine intervention," according to Xenophon in his *Memorabilia.* He constantly sacrificed in order to heed the teachings of his daimon.

Three distinct classes of monitions came to Socrates through his voice. First, Socrates' own wisdom and awareness were borne out in the messages of his daimon. Second, the daimon initiated an amazing rapport between the teacher and his pupils, and third, by his own admission, it encouraged Socrates to act in situations in which he displayed clairvoyance.

A number of accounts are extant which dramatize Socrates' psychic powers.

Illustrating the first class of psychic impressions, Plato, in the *Theages*, tells of a dinner which a young man named Timarchus enjoyed with Socrates. The young man was involved in a plot to assassinate another Athenian that very evening. Socrates knew nothing of the plot involving his young guest.

When he finished with the meal, Timarchus rose to leave and prepare for the killing. He apologized to his host for leaving so soon after supping, and asked if he might return later in the evening.

As Timarchus stood before Socrates, the sage's voice warned him of imminent danger for the young man.

"Do not leave this table," Socrates told him. "My daimon has so spoken."

Impressed, Timarchus seated himself once more.

A second time Timarchus started to leave, thinking of the grisly task ahead of him. Socrates, heeding his voice once more, warned the young would-be assassin against it. Once more Timarchus heeded this advice.

Timarchus felt committed to the proposed action, however, and was finally adamant in his desire to leave. Socrates' daimon again warned the young man to remain with Socrates, but this third time Timarchus was determined to leave. Doing so proved to be his doom.

Examples of the second form of psychism exhibited by Socrates, rapport, are harder to discern. The daimon managed to inform Socrates by some unknown method which of his pupils would be most receptive to what the sage had to teach. Thus Socrates influenced his students through the body of his teaching, and also through the psychic phenomena emanating from his mind.

Socrates' form of magnetism spurred at least one pupil to observe to his teacher that he never learned directly from Socrates, but seemed to make progress while near the philosopher.

"I did better at my studies if I was in the same room with you and even better when I sat near to you or touched you," he remarked. "When I am away from you I lose this ability to learn."

Socrates demonstrated his clairvoyant abilities in the following surviving story.

Once, while walking with a group of friends, Socrates' daimon warned him to leave the street he was on and go back to another. Most of his friends followed Socrates to the other street, but a few continued the way in which they had been travelling. Very soon a herd of swine ran into these skeptics, knocking them down and soiling their clothes. Socrates, however, and those who had followed him, were saved from this disturbance.

Socrates persistently adhered to his voice, telling many about it. It was this which ultimately brought about his doom. Socrates was called before the citizens of Athens and accused of bringing a new god—his daimon—into the city-state. He was similarly accused of foreswearing the old gods, which in the eyes of the Athenians made Socrates an atheist. Brought before his accusers, Socrates argued brilliantly in his own defense, yet he refused to deny the existence of his daimon.

Throughout the trial, Socrates' daimon remained silent, and as it only spoke out when Socrates planned to do something of which it did not approve, Socrates could only assume that he was doing the right thing.

Just before the philosopher drank the famous poison hemlock that killed him, the daimon did speak out, advising him not to make a detailed statement on the charges as he had planned. For the last time Socrates heeded the advice.

Instead the man was moved to remark: "Something has happened to me, a very wonderful thing. The accustomed divine intimation which has set me right many times has come to me concerning this very worst of ills. Though it has stopped me from speaking imprudently many times, it has not hindered me in any deed or word connected with this present business. And why do you think this is? Because what has happened to me is a good thing, and we must have been mistaken when we supposed that death was an evil. Herein is strong proof of this, as my signs would have told me if it were not."

Psychic investigators today have surmised that Socrates' daimon was the result of an extraordinarily heightened subconscious self, quite near the surface of his conscious mind, which attained a predominance over him. He went through great periods of ecstasy, and at other times sat in contemplative thought for hours, oblivious to attempts to rouse him, two factors which indicate an extremely elevated state of consciousness.

The most feasible comparison modern psychics offer is that of genius, described as a mental condition which allows a man to draw into conscious life the products of unconscious, or superconscious, thought.

THE POSSESSION OF DAVEY DEMARAY

When Alice and David Demaray saw the ad in the store for a refinished couch and easychair, they jumped at the opportunity. It never occurred to them that they were acquiring anything more than a second-hand couch and easychair.

The Demarays loaded the furniture into the back of their van and took it home with them immediately. Alive was so delighted to get rid of the old, beat-up sofa that she insisted David load the dilapidated old thing into the van and take it out to the dump. While David was doing so, Alice happily rearranged the furniture in the living room to accommodate their new purchases.

The next morning Alice arose at her customarily early hour and did what little housework there was. She ran a cloth over the sofa, though it did not really need it, and thought again how handsome it looked in the living room. She was pleased with the purchase. The couch had been something they needed, and the price had been reasonable. Still feeling pleased, Alice went into the kitchen to make breakfast.

Alice dispatched David to his office, then gathered up the children to take them to the day nursery. Carol and little Davey tumbled into the car, and Alice dropped them off at the nursery on her way to her job as receptionist at a dental office. It was July 10, 1963, and the weather was beautiful.

Later that night Alice sat alone, watching television. The rest of the family was asleep.

The show had nearly concluded when Alice noticed a dark shadow to the left of the new chair, positioned between the brightly-lit dining room and equally well-lit living room. When she focused her eyes directly on that spot, she could see nothing. Alice decided that her eyes were undoubtedly tired, as it was time for even night owls like herself to get sleepy. She resumed watching the television program.

A few minutes later, Alice saw the shadow again. This time it seemed to cross in front of her, moving directly toward the couch. Again, Alice could see the shadow out of the corner of her eye, but not when she focused directly upon it. Alice shrugged and jovially addressed the shadow:

"Are you a ghost?" she inquired politely. "I don't happen to believe in ghosts, but if you are one, you appear harmless enough. Stick around if you want to."

Having said her piece, Alice turned off the set and went upstairs to her bedroom. By morning she had forgotten the entire episode.

The next day Alice put in a particularly difficult day at the dental office. After the supper dishes were done and the children in bed, it felt good to curl up in the big easychair with a bit of escape fiction. David watched television for a while, then confessed that he was quite tired.

"Why don't you just go on upstairs to bed, honey," Alice told him. "I'll be up in a little bit. I want to finish this chapter."

David nodded and flicked off the television. Alice listened to the sound of his footsteps going up the stairs, then she settled back into her book. An innocuous house sound caused her to raise her head several moments later. She was surprised to see the shadow again. As with the previous evening, the shadow crossed in front of her and seemed to settle itself on the couch.

"Okay, ghost," Alice addressed the shadow facetiously. "If you want the couch tonight, you just go ahead and take it. I am way too tired to play games tonight, so good night! I'm going to bed."

With that Alice dropped a bookmark between the pages of her book and lay the closed volume on the table. As she was going upstairs she discovered herself inadvertently glacing back over her shoulder.

"Really, Alice," she chided herself. "You don't believe in ghosts."

Alice pulled the covers up over her ears and wondered vaguely if it was time to have the prescription changed in her glasses.

During the day David and Alice had received a letter from David's sister, reminding them that her planned vacation had arrived. She would be coming to the Demaray house the next day.

Martha arrived early the next morning, just before David left for work. David and Alice had a few moments to hug and kiss their welcome visitor before leaving for their respective offices. The children were jumping up and down with enthusiasm for their favorite aunt.

"Oh, boy!" Davey cried. "Now we don't have to go to nursery school. We can stay home and play with Aunt Martha."

Aunt Martha gathered the little boy up in her arms. "That's right, Davey. We'll have lots of fun together, won't we?"

Alice smiled her thanks at Martha, then kissed Davey and Carol goodbye.

"You be good for Aunt Martha," she reminded them.

"We will!" they chorused, as she went out the door.

Alice returned home and found a tempting meal prepared by Martha. Later, the older woman helped Alice change Carol and Davey into their pajamas, as well as read them a bedtime story.

"You're wonderful," Alice told Martha, as the two women went downstairs to join David. "You can come here as often as you like."

David and Alice and Martha heated the coffee and settled back for the enjoyable business of catching up on each others' lives. Martha had all the news of the family, and was eager to relay any messages from the Demarays.

"By the way," Martha noted approvingly. "I see you've made a few new purchases since I was here last. This couch and chair are new, aren't they?"

"Sort of new," David told her. "We bought them second-hand."

Talk of the couch reminded Alice of the shadow she had seen the past two evenings.

"Say, that reminds me," Alice said. "Has anyone seen old Rufus tonight?"

"Rufus!" David exclaimed. "Who's he?"

Alice chuckled. "Rufus is somewhat wispy in nature. Nevertheless he floats around here every evening and keeps me company when I'm up late."

"Floats around, you say?" David wanted to know.

"Alice, you're not saying this place is haunted, are you?"

Alice leaned over and patted her husband. "Sure, honey, by some kind of a ghostie or goblin. He seems harmless, but he's a lazy son of a gun. Spends all his time floating around and scaring little kids."

Alice chuckled at her description and stood up to demonstrate. As she was wafting around the room in mock imitation of a ghost, she suddenly felt a chill of fear enter through her spine. It seemed as though her innocent joke was seriously offending someone, for all at once she felt surrounded by ugly hatred. On some nonverbal level of her mind Alice knew that her joking had prompted very serious and dangerous hostility between her and "Rufus."

Alice dropped her play-acting and sat down heavily.

"Anything the matter, Alice?" Martha asked.

Alice managed a gay smile. "No, nothing. Tell me, what did you say Mom was doing to get Dad out of her hair now that he's retired?"

Having safely rerouted the conversation, Alice nodded and "uh-huh-"-ed at the appropriate moments. Her mind though, was occupied with the strange shift in the house's atmosphere that she undeniably felt. As she was musing over this, Alice became aware of something cold and invisible moving down the hall toward the children's bedrooms. Alice stiffened with fear, as she realized that whatever it was she had offended, it had decided to get even with her by going for her children.

Alice was ready to jump and cry out that something terrible was going to happen, but Davey's screams beat her to it. Alice was several steps ahead of David and Martha, as everyone started running upstairs. Something in the boy's voice seemed to tell them all that this was no ordinary nightmare.

Alice reached Davey's room first. She was almost afraid to go in, uncertain of what she would see. Her concern for Davey overrode her fear, though, and she rushed to her son's side.

"What is it, Davey?" she asked, holding him in her arms and trying her best to soothe him.

"There was an ugly old witch in my room!" he cried, gulping for air. "It was awful! It just stood there and sort of smiled at me, only I knew it wasn't really a smile."

The little boy began to cry softly, still terrified of the ghostly visage he had seen. David, Martha, and Alice assured him that he had only been having a bad dream.

"You know there's no such thing as witches," David told him.

"Yes," Davey answered doubtfully.

Aunt Martha fetched another bedtime story and started to read it to Davey. Finally, the efforts of all three conspired to lull the boy back to sleep. Wearily they all trooped back downstairs.

David placed his hands in his pocket, looking as if he wished to say something.

"What is it, David?" Alice asked.

"Nothing. It's just that—Alice, did you mention anything about ghosts to Davey, even as a joke?"

Alice stared him straight in the eye. "You know I wouldn't do that, David."

"Yes, I guess I do."

Alice bit her tongue. She had intended to tell her husband about the feeling she had experienced, when she felt that some ineffable *something* was heading towards the children's rooms with malicious intent. She

decided instead to remain quiet. David would never believe her.

Alice was loath to turn out the lights that evening. She walked throughout the house, trying to catch sight of the elusive shadow. The shadow was nowhere to be seen, but everywhere Alice turned she felt surrounded by burning hatred. With a growing sense of dread, Alice decided to leave all the lights on that night. She was beginning to feel a vague premonition of evil. She would sleep in Davey's room that night.

It was almost a pleasure to go to work the next morning and leave the oppressive atmosphere of the house. Alice looked closely at David and Martha to see if they, too, felt the presence, but they were apparently unaffected. Five-year-old Carol too, seemed unaware of anything extraordinary about the house. Only Davey seemed to sense anything, but Alice could not be sure.

Just before Alice's noon break, she received a call from Martha.

"Alice, I'm terribly sorry to bother you at work, but it's Davey. He claims to have seen the old witch again, and I can't quiet him down. He keeps screaming that an old witch was waiting for him up in his room this morning, and it crooked its finger at him. I don't know what to do."

Alice felt a feeling of dread spread through her body. She went into Dr. Marlow's office and arranged for the rest of the day off.

Martha and Alice made a concerted effort to keep the children occupied the rest of the afternoon. When Daddy came home the whole family went to a movie, then played in the park nearby. Carol and Davey were so exhausted by the time they reached home that they fell asleep almost immediately upon getting into bed. The Demarays hoped that Davey would have no opportunities for nightmares after his tiring day.

The process of wearing out Davey proved successful with the adults, as well, and all the lights were turned out early in the Demaray house that night. They had only been asleep a few hours when Davey's terrified screams again filled the house.

Alice and David rushed to Davey's room. As Alice stepped over the threshold she was shocked by the chill in the room. The temperature in the four-year-old's room was several degrees lower than the rest of the house. Alice could see nothing, but she was sure the evil force had been frightening Davey again.

"Oh, Mommy, Daddy, I had the terrible dream again! I can't stand it, I get so scared," the boy cried.

It took two hours to calm Davey. When he was finally sleeping again, David and Alice were both exhausted.

"David, I've got to talk to you," Alice said quietly. "It has to do with what's been scaring Davey."

"Yes?"

"Honey, ever since I was joking with you and Martha about the 'ghost' in the house, I have felt an evil presence. I don't know what it is, but it's full of hatred, and for some reason it's concentrating on Davey."

Alice saw David's face begin to fall as he listened to her. It was clear he did not believe her.

"David, listen, there's more," she said hurriedly. "Just before Davey woke up screaming last night, I just felt some cold, invisible thing moving down the hall to his room. I was about to jump up and say something when Davey started screaming.

"And tonight, didn't you feel it? Davey's room was

several degrees cooler than the rest of the house. That . . . that thing was in there with him!"

David sighed heavily. "I wish you hadn't said all this, Alice. I don't think it helps Davey any to have you going around saying these things."

"But I haven't said a word in front of Davey! I just feel it, and I wanted you to know."

"Okay, honey, okay," David placated her. "I know you wouldn't say anything to Davey. I just don't think it helps any to have you thinking these things.

"Listen, why don't we take Davey to a pediatrician tomorrow morning. Maybe there's some other reason he's having these dreams. Make an appointment first thing, all right?"

Alice nodded. Her thoughts were on "Rufus," though, and his malevolent intent. How could it be that only she and Davey were aware of it? David had not even noticed the temperature drop in Davey's room. How could he not notice? Alice decided wearily to let the matter rest and get what sleep she could.

Alice was able to get an appointment for Davey by mid-afternoon. She arranged leave from her office and took Davey to the clinic.

"Davey has been having terrible nightmares lately," she explained. "Yesterday he even thought he saw something in the daylight."

The doctor seemed unperturbed.

"It's nothing to trouble yourself about, Mrs. Demaray. Many children experience nightmares and other frightening things at this age. He'll grow out of it. Until he does, though, I suggest you stress the fact that it is 'just pretend.' Don't encourage the fantasy any more than you can help."

The doctor gave Alice a prescription for tranquilizers. "Give him one of these at bedtime, and see if that doesn't help him sleep more soundly," the doctor advised. "It should help you get more sleep, too," he noted.

Alice gave Davey the tranquilizers as the doctor had suggested, but they did not seem to help. Every night Davey woke up the household with his screams of terror. Frequently he would claim to see the "witch" in the daylight. All this time, Alice continued to feel the hatred smothering the house. For two weeks this continued, and though Alice continued to feel the evil presence and Davey continued to see it, Alice was unable to see a thing. Only her instincts reassured her that she was right to worry as she did.

One night Alice was taking a restless walk through the house, and as she walked she felt certain that the presence was mocking her every step of the way.

"You may be frightened now," it seemed to tell her, "but this is nothing like the fear you will be feeling shortly."

Alice began feeling helpless. She was being given a warning but the warning was no use to her. She still did not know what she was fighting, nor how to go about fighting it.

Alice was shaken by these thoughts. She crept uneasily into Davey's room, fearful again of what she would find there. All she saw was the tousled head of her little boy, sleeping peacefully. For some reason Alice was reluctant to leave the room. She gathered the boy into her arms and kept watch the rest of the night. Sleep was impossible.

The sun began to rise and Alice got up to prepare breakfast. She stopped in the bathroom and regarded her haggard reflection in the mirror. What was happening to her? Was she starting to go mad? Alice determined to put an end to the intolerable situation.

"I refuse to live like this," she told herself firmly. "I won't let it get me down. Everything is all right."

Alice went to the dental office feeling better than she had in weeks, despite her sleepless night. The day went beautifully. By the time she was ready to go home, Alice was convinced that nothing could crumble her newly acquired strength.

As the old Buick pulled into the driveway Alice could see David outside playing with the children. Alice turned off the ignition, got out of the car. "Hello!" she called.

David came over to her and pecked her on the cheek. Carol rushed excitedly to her mother and Alice swung the girl into her arms.

"How's my girl been today?" Alice asked her. For an answer she received a sloppy, enthusiastic kiss.

Alice looked around for Davey. The small boy was standing sullenly in front of the house. He was evidently not going to greet Alice.

"How about you, Davey, don't you have a big kiss for Mommy?" Alice walked toward Davey. She knelt in the grass in front of him with outstretched arms. Davey jerked his head away in disgust.

"I don't want to kiss you," he hissed with venom precocious for his four years. "I can't stand you. I don't want to be near you."

Alice was shocked and hurt. She glanced quickly at David and saw the look of astonishment on his face, too. This was not their loving little boy speaking. Alice strove to be calm.

"All right then, Davey. I'm going in the house. If you change your mind, you can bring your kiss to me in there."

Then Alice rose a bit stiffly and walked into the house. Davey did not follow. He grudgingly entered the house for supper, but refused to let his mother touch him. His sister could cuddle him, Aunt Martha could kiss and hug him, Daddy could wrestle with him and show his affection, but Mommy could not get near Davey.

This situation continued for the next few days. In desperation Alice stopped at a store on her way home from work and bought a toy for Davey. It was one he had been asking for for the past few weeks. Alice also picked up a little surprise for Carol.

When Alice arrived home, Carol was ready with her usual kiss, Davey with his by-now-usual scowl. Alice held out the packages.

"I have something for you," she told them, handing one package to Carol and the other to Davey.

"Oh, Mother," Carol squealed when she saw her doll. "She's beautiful!" The little girl crossed to her mother, gave her an impulsive hug and kiss.

"Oh, boy!" Davey cried, "my Hot Wheels tracks!"

"Can you give me a kiss for a thank you?" Alice asked.

Davey started to run toward his mother, joy on his face. Then he stopped in mid-track. An ugly sneer curled his mouth as he spat out his words: "You can't buy my kisses with presents."

Alice determined to remain calm. She was finally beginning to realize what was going on in Davey's room at night, when the "witch" came into his room and beckoned. She was determined to show Davey that Mommy understood. She would not penalize her boy for behavior inspired by the malevolent being in their house.

Alice gazed at her young son. She saw the indecision on his face and she knew he longed to run to her and throw his arms around her. Something else was holding him back, though, and that something frightened Alice. Davey stood in the center of the room, struggling with his natural desire and a feeling he could not understand. Suddenly he broke into a run and hurled himself into Alice's arms.

"Mommy, I do love you," he cried. "Sometimes I do."

Alice sat on the floor and pulled Davey into her lap. All at once Davey's face changed again. His smile was replaced by the evil sneer. As if repulsed, he slid out of Alice's lap.

"Why can't you just leave me alone!" he shouted as he ran from the room. "Leave me alone. I don't love you anymore."

Alice sat on the floor in despair. Carol stood in the corner, uncertain what to do. She wanted to comfort her mother, but felt instinctively that she should remain quiet. Alice put her hands to her face and began to sob disconsolately.

The kitchen door swung open and Alice heard her husband's measured tread approach her. A strong, sympathetic arm was placed on her shoulder, and a hand came down to help Alice rise.

"David, did you hear what he said?"

"Yes, dear," David soothed. "I heard the whole thing. Let's not talk about it now, though. Try not to let on to Davey how you feel. We'll eat dinner, put the kids to bed, then we'll be able to talk. Come on now, Alice. It'll work out fine, I know it will."

David's eyes lit on Carol, standing uncertainly in the corner of the room. He motioned to her.

"Carol, can you help Mommy with dinner? It's very important."

"I will. Come on, Mommy. Let's go set the table."

Later that evening, after the children were sleeping, Alice and David sat at the kitchen table to discuss the change in Davey. They invited Martha to join them.

"I heard that scene this afternoon, too," Martha told Alice. "I'm sure he didn't mean it."

As the discussion started, it was evident that David had already made up his mind what had to be done.

"I'm afraid we're going to have to take Davey to a psychiatrist," he announced soberly.

"Oh, no, David, not that!" Alice protested.

"But honey, he keeps insisting that he sees some old witch, day in and day out. Now he had a complete personality change and refuses to let his own mother touch him—the mother he has always loved very much," David added. "A drastic change like that indicates a troubled mind. I think we owe it to Davey to put away our prejudices regarding mental illness and take him to a doctor."

"David, there *is* something in this house, I know there is! There is something evil and awful in this house, and slowly but surely it's entering Davey's mind and causing him to act as he does. Don't you see that this thing is trying to possess our son?"

David replied swiftly and coldly. "Alice, I don't see anything, Carol doesn't see anything, and Martha doesn't see anything. Don't you see that your persistence in this silly thing only aggravates Davey's problem?"

Alice turned away, stricken. How could she ever convince her husband that she was telling the truth, not thoughtlessly adding to Davey's troubles?

Martha had been listening quietly, reluctant to enter the family discussion. She began to speak hesitantly.

"Alice, David, don't you think there's a possibility it might be something else altogether? I mean, Alice, I don't intend this as a slight, but do you realize that you are the only mother in the neighborhood who works? Maybe Davey resents not having his mother at home like all the other kids, and he doesn't like going to the nursery. He's been so glad to stay at home this past week with me here.

"Maybe by saying he doesn't like you, he's really saying that he doesn't like it when you leave him."

Alice stared at her sister-in-law. "Do you think that's it?" she asked.

"It could be."

"Fantastic!" Alice cried. "Oh, if that's all it is then I know I can change it. I'll quit my job!"

David nodded warmly at Martha. He agreed that she had probably discovered the source of the problem, but he urged nonetheless that Davey be taken to the doctor the next day.

"I think he should be examined anyway, for our own peace of mind. We should be told by someone who knows that there is nothing the matter with Davey."

Alice agreed. She went to bed feeling much better and resolved that she would talk to Dr. Marlow, her employer, first thing in the morning. She was sure the doctor would be able to find a replacement, and she would be relieved of her duties.

The next morning Alice told Davey of her decision to stop working. She carefully watched his face for any response. She was disappointed when he only shrugged indifferently. She thought she sensed a strong feeling of foreboding, but she resolutely tossed the thought from her mind.

Davey's visit to the pediatrician allayed any fears the Demarays might have had regarding possible brain or nerve damage. An extensive series of tests were run on the boy, and preliminary examination showed no physical cause for his personality change. The doctor saw no need to take Davey to a psychologist. He expressed his opinion that Davey was merely going through a stage that required an abundance of patience, love, and understanding. The doctor urged Alice to stress anew that Davey's fantasies were "just pretend."

Alice was determined to do whatever was right for her boy; and late that night, after everyone else had retired, she mulled over the situation. As she was sitting on the couch she felt the temperature in the room drop inexplicably. A dozen warning alarms went off in her head, and she feared to raise her eyes and look around the room.

A death-like chill permeated the room. The atmosphere of hatred seemed to strengthen and swirl around Alice's head. She knew that something monstrous and evil was in the room with her.

Cautiously, Alice raised her head. There, in front of her, was the shadow she had first seen weeks ago and playfully named "Rufus." The hands and face of the shadow appeared lighter than the rest of the form, and Alice was able to make out its features. Bright, soulless eyes stared hollowly at her. The being was grossly emaciated, and the yellowish-green skin clung tautly to the thing's high cheekbones. Long hair flowed to its shoulders.

The face was truly horrifying to see, but what seized Alice even more were the creature's ghastly hands. The thing's arms were outstretched, its fingers separated, its hands palms down. The crooked claws of the entity's bony hands stretched in front of her

and Alice's mind flashed back to Davey's description of the "witch" who "crooked its fingers at me."

At last Alice knew fully what the sepulchral being intended to do. All her fears and suppositions were confirmed as the hideous being materialized in front of her. It intended to take her son, to murder his soul and inhabit his body.

Slowly the form dematerialized before Alice's frightened eyes. The chill lifted from the room and its natural temperature was restored. With a sudden jolt of fear Alice ran upstairs into Davey's room. She sat on his bed and gathered his sleeping form into her arms.

She must think of what to do. She must find a way to thwart the creature's evil intent. Inadvertently she visualized his ghastly form. She saw the lips curl into the vile sneer, and her body shook when she realized that this was the sneer she had seen on Davey's face the day she had brought him the toy.

It was clear that the being was trying to possess Davey, and that its plan was well underway. Alice tried to clear her mind of extraneous distractions. Naturally, she thought, the entity would attack Davey, since he was the youngest and most vulnerable to such an approach. But how could she hope to fend such a hideous fate?

Alice thought of her husband and sister-in-law and immediately crossed them off her list. How could she appeal to them for help when she could not get them to believe her? How could she persuade anyone to believe such a bizarre circumstance? She was alone, she realized despairingly. Completely alone. If anyone was to save Davey, it would have to be she.

Alice lowered her head and allowed a few tears to well in her eyes. As she did so, a mocking, sneering laugh filled the room. With a start, Alice noted that the creature could both hear her thoughts and respond to them.

Alice held the body of her son all night while he slept. Alice had no desire to sleep. She knew she had to formulate a plan to thwart that of the evil creature inhabiting their home. Vainly she strove to think of someone to whom she could turn for help.

Morning came, and with it came Alice's responsibility to her job. Soon Dr. Marlow would find a replacement and she would no longer have to leave, but until then Alice was frightened to leave Davey alone in the house. She insisted that Carol and Davey go to the nursery. Carol seemed happy to go, Davey was reluctant. Alice forced him to grudgingly leave.

Alice walked into the dental office building determined to speak with Dr. Marlow. She knew she must confide in someone.

"Alice, what on earth is the matter with you?" Dr. Marlow asked when he saw her. "Don't you feel well?"

Alice dropped wearily into the chair facing Dr. Marlow's desk. Without introduction she launched into a recitation of the things which had been going on in her home, ending with description of the being she had seen the night before.

Dr. Marlow listened politely to Alice, but it was clear he did not believe her.

"Listen, Alice, I'll have a replacement any day now. Why don't you just take this time off and get some rest."

"You don't believe me either, do you, Dr. Marlow?" Alice asked in a low, empty voice.

Dr. Marlow sought the gentlest way to answer her. "I'm sorry, Alice, but I don't."

The rest of the day Alice worked listlessly, dangerously close to severe depression. Midway through the morning, an old friend stopped in for an appointment and expressed shock upon seeing Alice's condition. Marcia Cisek insisted that her friend join her for a coffee break.

"As soon as I'm through with my appointment, you've got to come and talk to me, Alice," Marcia told her. "Something is very obviously troubling you, and I want to help if I can."

At first Alice was reluctant to speak. Already she had suffered disbelief from her husband, her sister-in-law, and her trusted friend and employer, Dr. Marlow. Marcia coaxed the story out of her, and once Alice was into her narrative Marcia did not interrupt once. The look on the other woman's face was so earnest and sympathetic that Alice plunged into the entire story, omitting nothing.

"But of course there's no such thing as ghosts," Alice concluded lamely, fearing another negative assessment of her story. "Everyone knows that."

Marcia stroked her chin thoughtfully. "I'm not so sure about that, Alice. You know, an awful lot has been happening with psychic investigation. There are people studying all the things you speak of, and they say that an energy source can remain behind after a person dies, especially if the person died violently. They leave this kind of emotional residue, and other people add to it when they feel emotions strongly.

"It sounds like you could have one of these energy residues in your house somehow. You say it's getting stronger, too, because you were able to see more of it last night. That means that you have been feeding it energy by constantly thinking about it, fearing it, worrying about it, worrying about Davey. You've got to stop feeding it energy. If you don't, it could possibly become strong enough to take up residence in Davey."

"How can I stop feeding it energy?"

"You're going to have to find a way to ignore it, Alice. You've got to let it know that you're no longer afraid of it, that you know you're stronger than it is. Think with all your might: 'I know how to deal with you now and you can no longer frighten me. Go away, you no longer have any influence in this house.'"

"I don't know if I can do that, Marcia. It frightens me terribly."

"You have to do it, though. You have no choice. You've got to stop it before it reaches Davey." Marcia was thoughtful. "I tell you what. I know some people who are knowledgeable in these matters. Let me contact them and see if they can help you. I'll give you a call after I've talked to them. In the meantime, stop feeding it energy!"

Alice went home that afternoon with a new surge of hope. Perhaps she would, indeed, to able to rid her house and her son of the terrible creature that had come to rob them of their peace.

As Alice's car pulled into the driveway Davey spilled out and went running to his father.

"Hey, Daddy," he cried, "look at me!"

Alice was just stepping out of the car, opening the door for Carol. When she saw Davey, she froze. There was the same hideous sneer on Davey's face! He was walking slowly toward David with his arms outstretched, hands palms down and fingers crooked in an exact imitation of the obsessing entity. Alice strove to make her voice sound casual.

"What's that, Davey?"

Davey glanced at Alice with a scowl of annoyance.

"That's the way the old witch looks at me," he said, as if he had expected her to know that.

"What makes you so sure it's a witch."

"Oh, I don't know. I just call it that because it's so ugly," Davey shrugged, and Alice was fearful of the familiarity Davey now seemed to share with the visage that used to terrify him.

"Witches are just pretend, though, aren't they?"

"Yeah, I guess so," Davey responded offhandedly.

All at once Alice saw an opportunity to convince David of the ghost's validity. She acted quickly, "Carol, Davey, you go inside with Aunt Martha."

Alice turned to David. "Martha is back from her visiting, isn't she?" David nodded.

Alice spoke to the children again. "All right then, you two go in and stay with Aunt Martha. Daddy and I will be gone for just a little while, then we'll be right back."

Alice then turned to David. "Please David, get in the car and come with me. I know it seems strange, but it's very important."

David threw Alice a quizzical glance, but willingly went to the car.

Alice slid behind the wheel and drove down the street without comment. She was thinking furiously of how to execute her plan successfully to convince David that the entity in their house was real, and not a figment of Alice's imagination.

Alice had just talked to Marcia that afternoon, explaining what things had been happening in the Demaray house and describing the being that had appeared before her. Alice had not yet told David about the manifestation she had seen the night before, and little Davey had just demonstrated to both his parents for the first time the mannerisms of the entity. If she could ask Marcia to describe to David what Alice had seen and David would realize that Davey and Alice were not in collusion, perhaps David would believe that Alice's "Rufus" was actually a supernatural being trying to possess his son.

"Please come with me, David," Alice asked as they stopped in front of the Cisek's home. "In a moment it will all be clear."

The Demarays were greeted at the door by a somewhat surprised Marcia Cisek. Alice apologized for the intrusion.

"Please forgive me, Marcia, but I didn't want to call," Alice explained. "I want David to know that we haven't spoken to each other since this afternoon."

Marcia, still mystified, nodded earnestly to David, eager to pick up Alice's cue. "That's true, David, we haven't talked to each other since this afternoon when I insisted that Alice have a cup of coffee with me and tell me what was bothering her."

Alice regarded her husband solemnly. "David, have I ever given you a description of the thing I sense in our house?"

"No," David answered truthfully.

"Has Davey ever told you about the thing he thinks he sees in the house?"

"Of course, just minutes before we came over here. You saw it, too."

Alice turned to Marcia. "Marcia, have I ever told you about the thing I see in the house?"

"Yes, this afternoon," Marcia replied.

Marcia proceeded to describe the hideous entity exactly as Alice had described it to her—and exactly as Davey had portrayed it in the yard in front of his parents.

David was shaken, but still unwilling to commit himself to the idea of an evil entity trying to possess their son.

"It's so medieval, Alice," he remarked in the car, as they were returning home. "How can such a thing be? Yet how else could both you and Davey have seen the same thing?"

Alice lay a reassuring hand on her husband's arm.

"I know it's hard to accept, David, but you do believe me now, don't you?"

David nodded his head slowly.

"David, one more thing. It's very important. Marcia said that the thing draws energy from us by our thoughts and strong emotions. Please try not to think of it at all."

"I'll try," David promised.

That evening David was very quiet. Throughout supper he sat lost in thought, scarcely eating his food. Alice, on the other hand, felt herself growing almost jubilant. She was convinced now that she had the means by which to defeat the terrible entity that had disturbed the sanctity of her home.

Since Davey had begun actively disliking his mother, the bedtime ritual had changed at the Demarays'. Alice had confined her attention to Carol, and David had assumed the responsibility of putting Davey to bed.

Davey had never rejected affection from his father, yet this night he suddenly scowled at David and refused to let himself be touched.

"You're getting as bad as she is," he snarled, indicating his mother.

A stricken look crossed David's features. Alice hurriedly entered the room.

"Davey's a big enough boy to put on his own pajamas, aren't you?" she said smoothly. "He can put himself to bed. Good night, dear."

Alice reached for her husband's arm and led him out of the bedroom. David was deeply hurt.

"Alice, come and talk."

"Remember, we have to try to ignore it."

David nodded.

The two entered the living room, determined to get involved in something on television. They had been engrossed in a program for several minutes when the windows began to make a fearsome noise. They were shaking violently, but there was no wind outside. The Demarays gritted their teeth and vowed to ignore it.

The drawn curtains began to flail wildly. David spoke, tension in his voice.

"Ignore it, David. Please," Alice pleaded.

No sooner had Alice spoken than she heard a voice from inside her mind. The bodiless voice dripped with malice: "You cannot ignore me. I am stronger than you."

With a start Alice realized that she was being communicated with telepathically. With all concentrated attention Alice returned a thought: "We are stronger than you are. You cannot defeat us. Now get out of our house!"

The only reply was garish, low-pitched laughter.

The curtains continued to fly from the closed windows. Suddenly David jumped up.

"My God, Alice, I can't take it. We've got to take the children and get out if here!"

"It's too late for that, David. We've got to stick it out and fight him now, otherwise we'll never be free. He knows the showdown is approaching. David, don't

you see how it works? As soon as you started believing in the possibility of its existence, Davey wouldn't let you near him. He's already too close to Davey for us to run."

"Do you mean this thing can read my thoughts?" David asked, stupefied.

"Not only can it read your thoughts, but it can communicate with you. It's been talking to me, tonight. We've got to be strong, David."

The Demarays concentrated fiercely on the television set. Eventually, the wind from nowhere died down, and the draperies once more settled quietly against the windows. When things were quiet, Alice persuaded David to go to bed. Then she stole noiselessly into Davey's room.

Alice gathered her sleeping boy into her arms and tried to prepare herself for whatever was to come. Somehow she knew that this night would be the crucial one, and she feared she was not yet strong enough to combat such a powerful force of evil.

Alice pondered the situation as calmly as she could, determined to reserve as much energy for herself as she could. The combination of many sleepless nights was beginning to take its toll, however, and Alice had to fight to remain alert. Sometime after 2:00 A.M., her eyelids wearily closed.

All at once Alice was wide awake, suffused with a terror beyond anything she had ever experienced. Her throat was dry, her skin tingling with dread. She feared intensely for her own life and the life of her son.

In desperation Alice closed her eyes tightly and prayed for strength and protection. Her eyes flew open as she felt the chilling approach of the detestable being.

The entity knew that this night was his last chance, for Alice and David were getting stronger. Tonight the thing would have to make its final effort to possess the living body of four-year-old Davey—and destroy anything that would try to stop it.

Alice eased herself away from Davey and glanced wildly around the room. She wanted some kind of weapon, something that she could place between the being and her own vulnerable self.

A Bible shown luminescently on Davey's dresser as faint moonlight fell on its white cover. Alice lunged for the Bible and clutched it in front of her. Then she started to walk the longest journey of her life.

She was shaking with fear, uncertain as to her plan of action. There was no running, though, for more than her own safety was at stake. She had to save her son.

Alice walked slowly out of Davey's room and down the hall. The death-like chill seemed concentrated most heavily at the end if the hallway. This would have to be where the entity was waiting.

Alice had only gone halfway down the hall when the form materialized before her. Surrounded by a sepulchral haze and with eyes dripping venom, the ghastly visage came slowly toward her. Its bony hands were outstretched again, palms down, and an almost irresistible force seemed to flow from the yellow-green claws. Alice thought that if those hands should once touch her, her soul would be ripped to agonizing shreds.

The being stepped closer and for one moment Alice faltered. Her mind started to swirl and she knew she was losing to the being's demoniacal power. From faraway, she heard its soulless laughter.

The sound of that laughter was all Alice needed to pull herself together.

"I will not let you defeat me!" she almost shouted, mentally. Somewhere inside of her Alice seemed to have tapped a primeval energy source. Centuries of culture and sophistication slipped away and Alice was an enraged animal protecting her young. She held the Bible in front of her and boldly stepped toward the evil creature.

"You thought you could win and possess my son, and you almost succeeded. But you will succeed no more. I am stronger than you are, this Word is stronger than you are. You are beaten! Leave my son, leave my house, you can no longer harm us!"

As Alice moved forward she saw the creature step hesitantly back. Feeling a tremendous surge of power, Alice continued to move in on him, no longer afraid.

"Leave us!" she commanded. "Go back to wherever you belong."

The entity continued to retreat from Alice, growing smaller as it went. Alice was unaware of their location in the house until she noticed that they were in the living room. "Rufus" was heading toward the couch.

"So that's it!" she exclaimed. "Now I know. Leave us, leave us entirely!"

Alice advanced on the couch, where the being seemed to be centered. As she approached, the thing became increasingly dimmer. The vaguely luminescent quality departed, and Alice was staring at the formless shadow she had first seen weeks before. Finally that, too, evaporated into nothingness.

Without moving or taking her gaze from the couch, Alice called to David. When her sleepy husband arrived at her side, Alice gave terse orders. She refused to move her eyes from the couch.

Alice insisted that the couch be taken from their house that night. She told David to load the piece of furniture into the van. She would accompany him and they would unload it at the city dump.

As the two made their desperate trip to the dump, Alice explained to David what had happened. She was convinced that she had cornered Rufus in the couch, and that he was going on his last ride. She had ceased to sense his presence.

With only the pale light of a crescent moon to guide them, David and Alice lifted the couch from the car and placed it amid the city's debris. As if for a ritual cleansing, David held his cigarette lighter against the cloth and ignited the piece of furniture.

"It's over," Alice whispered, clutching her husband's arm and watching the blazing couch. "It's finally over."

When the last flames had died down, Alice and David drove back home. Together they climbed the stairs and walked down the hallway to Davey's room. Their boy was sleeping serenely. Alice walked over to him and lay her hand on his forehead.

"Mommy?" a sleep voice asked.

"Yes, Davey, it's Mommy."

"Oh, Mommy, I love you," Davey told her.

David came forward and smiled down at his son. Alice sighed deeply.

"Thank God," she said meaningfully. "We won."

POSSESSED BY A DEAD MAN

An Oregon man dead three years solved his own murder through a girl he had never met.

Salem, Oregon, is a canning town. Close to the Pacific Ocean and near two mighty rivers, the Willamette and the Columbia, the canning factories tin a wide variety of ocean and inland fish. The lush Oregon countryside provides many times the fruits and vegetables the state's populace needs, and the canning factories market the rest.

Bridges span deep caverns in Salem and the surrounding territory, and one of these large steel bridges played an important role in an excellently documented case of possession.

Early one May morning in 1942 the body of a rugged, twenty-two-year-old fruit cannery worker, Warren Foley, was discovered lying on the bank of the river, just out of the water. He had been dead only a few hours, according to medical examiners.

Foley's head lay against a large stone. His left arm was doubled under his chest, his right arm outstretched, pointing back toward the river. His legs were pointed in the direction of the water. A coroner's examination revealed bleeding from the mouth, suggestive of a concussion or a cranial fracture.

The only clothing still on the body were black walking shorts and a cotton sock on the left foot. The rest of his clothing was scattered around the body.

The evening before, Foley and four companions, Norman Klein, Larry Bishop, Jim Gustavson, and Peter Scribner, had been drinking in a local tavern. Foley's half-brother, Richard Meyer, joined them later in a drinking and card-playing session.

Gustavson later told authorities, "There had been arguments during the evening, but everyone ended up drinking until about twelve when Skip (as Warren was called by his close friends) said he didn't feel well and went home." That was the last anyone in the group saw him, Gustavson said.

Following a lengthy series of interviews and minute examination of the physical facts in the case, the coroner's report listed the death as a suicide. Foley had been depressed since the breakup of a love affair, the coroner said, and this triggered the suicide leap from the bridge.

This verdict was not accepted by all, however, as a statement issued by friends and relatives of the deceased after the coroner's report indicated.

"We find it hard to believe that Warren Foley could have sustained so few fractures and other injuries after jumping 168 feet onto rocky ground," the statement said in part. They called for the coroner to reopen the case, but this was not done.

Speculation in the town was that Foley had been murdered elsewhere, for some unnamed reason, and placed beneath the bridge, an apparent suicide.

Three years passed, and the case was all but forgotten.

Then in a small, rather poor section of Salem, about a half mile from the bridge where Foley had been found, a strange malady struck a nineteen-year-old girl, Janice McMillan. The illness was described primarily by her family as "not being herself." The girl was healthy, a doctor's examination showed. Her eyes were bright, her vision excellent and her long, dark hair was thick and shiny. Her reflexes were good and strong. The only oddities noted in the physical examination were a slight enlargement of the right lobe of the thyroid gland and some unusual ocular responses to red light.

A psychiatric examination revealed a girl of slightly above average intelligence, personable and seemingly happy. Janice, who worked as a sales clerk at a small department store, did not smoke or drink. From reports of neighbors, coworkers and friends, she was a normal, popular and bright girl.

There was nothing in her physical or mental conditions to explain the abnormalities in her makeup, although these differences were becoming increasingly serious.

The abnormality was the connection between Janice and Warren Foley, now dead over three years. Janice had never met Foley, nor did she know any of his family or friends. She was only vaguely familiar with the Foley case, remembering the newspaper accounts and local talk a few years before.

The statements which Janice began to make in the summer of 1945 revealed a knowledge of Warren Foley, his background, and his final few hours which she would not formerly have possessed.

The physician and psychiatrist were impressed by Janice's sincerity in her normal state and gave a number of reasons for trusting her statements when she spoke as Warren Foley.

Dr. Wallace Lerner said, "Janice has no reason to tell lies, and she has a reputation for honesty among her friends." Furthermore, he said, she had no reason to reopen the Warren Foley case, of which she personally knew little.

Shortly before Janice's severe psychic disturbances, she had traveled by bus to Portland and back to visit her mother, then doing war work with the USO. Her grandmother, Helen Lotsburg, accompanied her. Walking home from the bus depot Janice and her grandmother passed over the bridge which figured in Warren Foley's death.

Suddenly, Janice crossed the road and dropped to the ground, complaining of pains in her knees. Her grandmother asked help from a passerby, and between them they half-carried and half-led the semi-conscious Janice home. Her grandmother was extremely upset by the incident and put Janice to bed immediately.

As soon as she was in bed, Janice was shaken by a strange frenzy in which she called repeatedly for her mother, asking that she be brought to the home. Her voice had taken on a deep, masculine tone.

Janice's grandmother and other members of the family thought it advisable to send for the girl's mother, who came from Portland as quickly as she could. Rushing into her daughter's room, Jacqueline McMillan was greeted only with a blank stare from Janice.

"You aren't my mother," Janice said. "You may own this house and live here, but my mother lives on Forrest Avenue. Her name is Ellen, and I am Skip."

It took several moments after this strange declaration for someone to remember that Warren Foley's nickname had been Skip, and that he had lived with his mother on Forrest Avenue.

Once again Janice began calling for her mother, this time wanting Ellen Foley.

Stories told in Salem ranged from statements that Janice was insane to statements that the spirit of Warren Foley had invaded her. Janice's new resonant voice bore out the latter conclusion, many said.

It was at this point in the case that Dr. Victor C. Shea entered. Hearing the gossip and rumors spreading through this particular section of Salem, he decided to investigate the phenomenon on his own. After gaining the confidence of the McMillan family, he began examining Janice when she was normal, then during her seizures. He talked to witnesses of the seizures. In all, Dr. Shea visited the McMillan home fourteen times during Janice's possession.

Furthermore, seven doctors were consulted on the case, several of which did an extensive study of the bizarre happenings that year in Salem town.

Janice's first lengthy seizure lasted more than twenty-four hours, during which she revealed amazing details of Foley's personal life and thoughts. She talked extensively of the hours leading up to his death.

"I am Skip," she said. "And I insist that I did not commit suicide. I was quite horribly murdered."

Still she was insisting upon seeing her "mother," Ellen Foley. Attempts were made to locate her, but she was not found immediately.

"Skip" wrote a note to be delivered to his mother: "Dear Mother, if you want to see me, I am still your son."

The police laboratory later compared the handwriting on the note to a sample of Foley's script, written before he died. They were exact copies. Janice had never seen a sample of Foley's handwriting. Thus, through the handwriting, it was established that Janice's "Skip" and Warren Foley had almost exactly the same personalities.

Several days later, when Janice was stronger, she chose four men from among the onlookers gathered around her now-famous house. Giving each a name: Norman, Larry, Jim, and Peter—the names of Foley's drinking partners the night he had died—Janice sat down to drink and play cards as Warren Foley had done on his last night. She asked for several bottles of liquor, and spent the evening drinking, smoking cigarettes, and paying close attention to the poker game.

As each new drink was poured, Skip berated his fellow card players.

"What do you want me to get drunk for? Why don't you do the same as you did then—put salt and sugar and pepper in my drinks to fool me?"

By this time Janice, normally a nondrinker, had consumed over a quart of whiskey and had been chain-smoking for nearly four hours.

A whiskey glass crumbled in Janice's hand and smashed to the floor. The whiskey and cigarettes, foreign to Janice's constitution, had made her violently ill and she started to go back into the house.

Before doing so, in a daze, she shouted, "What are you doing to me, Jim? . . . Larry, stop hitting me, please, please, help, somebody. . . . Help me . . . They're trying to kill me, they're taking me under the bridge!"

After going into the house she vomited, and was ill throughout the rest of the night, unable to sleep.

After a miserable night, Janice, as Skip, agreed to see Gerald Jenson, Foley's brother-in-law, who showed her a photo of Jenson's wife and Foley's sister, Lu Ann.

"It's my sister, it's Lu Ann," Skip said. He continued to be very emotional and kissed the photo, asking if he might keep it.

A while later Janice awoke, still in the Skip personality, and announced that her mother was coming to see her.

"She's driving over the bridge now; I can see her," Skip-Janice said.

About three minutes later she got out of bed and went to the front door of the house. A minute later Ellen Foley arrived at the house.

After visiting for a while with his mother, Skip told her and the others gathered around the story of the murder.

"Mama, Norman, Larry, Jim and Richard killed me," he said. He went on to explain that while drinking his companions had put something into his liquor, then had taken him near the bridge.

"Norman began kicking me, and Jim punched me in the eye."

They took off his clothes and carried him under the bridge after breaking his jaw with a large brick. When they had him under the bridge they all began savagely to beat him, breaking his right wrist. Finally they placed his head on a rock to make it appear as though he had jumped from the bridge and hit his head.

"There were four against me, Mama, and I was really drunk from all the booze," he told her.

Skip went on during the afternoon to reveal information he could not have known during his lifetime. He related that Norman had died in the hospital. This was true, for Norman Klein had died of a respiratory ailment just after Christmas, 1944, and even though a devout Catholic, had refused the Last Sacraments before he died.

Another of Foley's murderers, Jim Gustavson, had joined the U.S. Army and gone off to serve in World War II shortly after Skip's death, he revealed. No one had heard of Gustavson since his enlistment. He was not a native of Salem. Originally from Santa Rosa, California, Gustavson had no relatives and few friends in the Salem area, none of whom had managed to keep track of him.

"Jim was terribly hurt in the face," Skip said, the result of a fierce battle with the Japanese in the South Pacific.

Later during the same afternoon Skip received a flash that another of his murderers was coming to the house, and soon. Shortly thereafter Larry Bishop arrived at the house. Bishop was cautious and refused to go into the bedroom and see the girl. He left soon after.

On August 1, 1945, Sgt. Ralph Rutledge of the Salem Police Force decided he should visit the McMillan house. After hearing stories and rumors about the case he knew he had something to contribute. Rutledge did not know Janice, but he had known Warren Foley slightly.

The Skip personality instantly recognized Sgt. Rutledge and invited him into the house. Skip reminded him that they had run into each other on the night of the murder, as Skip had passed Rutledge's house, where the latter was working in the garden.

Rutledge asked, "Where did you go after you left me that night?"

Skip picked up a pad of paper and a pencil, writing "Betty's house."

Rutledge reminded those present that Betty was Norman Klein's wife. Later, on the evening of the murder, Rutledge remembered hearing a lot of loud noise from the Anchor Inn Tavern, where the boys had been drinking and playing cards.

During Rutledge's visit, Skip reported that he could

not eat, as his teeth were very loose and his jaw was broken. Upon examination it was discovered that Janice's lower jaw made a terrific cracking noise when moved and was very tender to the touch. Her teeth, moreover, were extremely loose.

Rutledge reported he was amazed by the happenings within the McMillan home.

Several other relatives of Foley's came to see him, all of whom he recognized. He was obviously delighted to see his brother Robert, but refused to have much to do with George, who, he said, had been cruel to their mother in an argument a few weeks before. The truth of this was attested to by several persons, including George himself.

Friends who came to visit and were enthusiastically greeted and entertained by Skip were Mike Dobney and Bobby Montgomery. Another close friend, Allan B. Leavitt, was sent on an errand by Skip.

"Go to the diner and get me a cheeseburger, with lots of fried onions," he requested. "And on the way back stop at the drugstore and get a bottle of that beer I like so much."

Leavitt, amazed at hearing these familiar requests once again from his long-dead friend, went out to do the errands immediately.

Still another friend, Roy Driscoll, brought a photograph test for Skip.

"That's your sister Dorothy and she's dead, Roy," Skip remarked upon seeing the photo.

Dorothy Driscoll was indeed dead, having been killed in a 1940 car crash following a dance Skip and his friends had attended.

Skip spent another afternoon discussing jobs they had worked at during summer vacations with a high school friend, Kevin Rose.

Dr. Victor Shea, after all these visits, was convinced that whether or not Skip had possessed Janice, the girl knew the background and memories of the late Foley exactly. Furthermore, Janice seemed to have forgotten everything about her own life during the times she was Skip.

Shortly after the doctor's pronouncement that the possession seemed real, Skip announced that he had severe pains in his leg.

"I must go back to the bridge and get my clothes," he said dazedly.

Four friends helped "Skip" to the bridge. Upon reaching the edge of the cliff, Skip-Janice started to descend. As the cliff was extremely steep, onlookers, including Jacqueline McMillan, Janice's real mother, became terrified for her safety.

Mrs. McMillan tried to stop her daughter, but Janice had already started down the steep hill.

"Please, God, stop her. She'll kill herself; she'll kill herself!" Mrs. McMillan shouted.

After the lengthy and wearying descent, Janice finally reached the riverbank. At this point she began to remove her clothing, leaving on the same items Warren Foley wore as he died. She assumed the exact positioning of limbs, lying on the ground with her head next to a rock—all in a perfect imitation of the manner in which Foley's body was found, even though she had never seen the actual body lying there.

She sank into unconsciousness.

After several minutes the girl arose and looked around her, puzzled at the people gathered round. Clearly, Janice's personality had returned. She again recognized the persons close to her whom she had not known as Skip. She was aided up the steep hill and returned home.

Her relatives told Janice the incidents of the past week, but she remembered nothing of the possession. She was ashamed and confused, refusing to see people at first. Eventually she allowed doctors to examine her, who said physically there was little difference between the Janice and Skip personalities.

Later the girl issued a statement in which she said she remembered nothing about the incidents, and denied every knowing anything about Warren Foley save vague recollections regarding his controversial death three years before.

Dr. Shea also issued a report stating that it might never be determined what caused Janice's split personality. He raised the question whether the new personality might have been constructed by extrasensory perception.

"The answer may hinge on motivation," he said. There was no reason for Janice to wish to reopen the Foley murder case, or to prove that Skip was not a suicide case.

If Warren Foley's spirit did possess Janice McMillan's body, it was clearly to remove the word "suicide" from the records. After he had done so, his spirit disappeared and Janice's personality returned.

THE LITTLE BOY WHO WAS POSSESSED

Mrs. Elaine Rundquist and Mrs. Jacqueline Saunders had decided to take the children to Lincoln Park for the day on Chicago's "front lawn," or lake shore. It was the first truly warm day of spring after an unusually dreary Chicago winter.

"Mommy!" cried Sherry Saunders. "Want to see me do a sommersault?"

The two women watched and applauded as six-year-old Sherry executed the maneuver. Jacqueline turned to Elaine.

"What she lacks in grace she more than makes up in bravado," she said, laughing.

"Watch me, Mommy!" another voice cried, as Jonathon Rundquist, the same age as Sherry, prepared to thrill the ladies with his interpretation of the same maneuver. A tumble of arms and legs overturned on the grass and once again the mothers applauded.

"Thank goodness we were able to get out of the apartment building today," Elaine told Jackie. "Can you imagine how the china would have rattled if that thud had been in the living room rather than the park?"

The children ran on, shouting and laughing. The mothers took advantage of a park bench, and sat down to keep an eye on the children.

A sidewalk followed a path around the perimeter of the park. Beyond one side of it stretched Lake Michigan.

"Race you to the sand!" Sherry called to her young companion, and both took off as fast as their legs could carry them toward the still icebound waters.

Suddenly, Jonathon was down. Elane jumped to her feet.

"Relax, Elaine," Jackie urged. "He's all right."

Jonathon did not move. Sherry turned back to look for her playmate and screamed. "Quick," she cried. "He's bleeding!"

Elaine rushed to her child and choked back a cry of fear. Jonathon had evidently tripped over the edge of the sidewalk, bringing his head down hard on the cement pavement. A thin trickle of blood oozed from his forehead. The boy lay unconscious. He was rushed to the hospital.

"A slight concussion, Mrs. Rundquist," the doctor informed Elaine. "He's conscious now, though. Relax, now, he'll be all right."

The Rundquists kept Jonathon as quiet as they could for a week, and he showed none of the signs the doctor had told them to look for which would have indicated more serious damage. They were relieved that he was all right, but concerned over whether or not they should take the weekend trip that they had scheduled a month earlier for that weekend.

Jackie urged them to go.

"Listen, after this little shake-up both of you could use a bit of relaxation," Jackie told the Rundquists. "I think you should still go. Frank and I will take care of

Jonathon, as we had originally planned, and we'll keep a close eye on him. Go on now."

Reluctantly the Rundquists agreed to go. They brought Jonathon over to the Saunders, who lived next door to them in their apartment complex, and bade their boy goodbye. Jonathon regarded them gravely from the doorway.

"Bring me back a surprise," he reminded them.

"Wait and see," they teased.

When the Rundquists returned to Chicago Sunday evening they had a surprise for Jonathon, a bit nicer than his usual fare because of the circumstances. Jonathon also had a surprise for them.

Jackie gave her husband Frank a "let me handle this" look when they heard the Rundquists knocking on their door. She went to the door and greeted her friends, but Elaine could sense the hesitation in her manner.

"What is it? Is it . . ."

"It's Jonathon. Elaine, I think you had better bring him to a doctor. He's, well. . . ." Jackie turned from them and called towards the back room. "Jonathon, your parents are here!"

Jonathon came to the living room and stared disinterestedly at his parents. Not a spark of recognition shone in his eyes.

"Who are these people?" he inquired in a polite, stuffy voice, more like a man of fifty than a boy of six. "I'm sure I don't know them."

"Jonathon!" Elaine cried. "It's Mommy and Daddy. We're back and we brought you a surprise." Elaine held up a large, stuffed Snoopy dog. Jonathon was apparently amused.

"I haven't had anything like that for years," he chuckled.

Elaine let the animal droop in her hands, a look of shock on her face.

"Well, here, then," Jonathon acquiesced. "I imagine this little boy here would like it. No need to stand there so dismally with the thing wilting out of your hands." He reached forward and took the dog under his arm.

Mr. and Mrs. Rundquist stared at each other, at a loss for words.

"Maybe we had better go into the kitchen for a cup of coffee," Jackie quickly interjected. "Will you continue looking after Sherry?" she asked of Jonathon.

"Be glad to, Madam; I have always loved children."

The line would have been ludicrous coming out of a six-year-old child if all four adults had not realized that something far from ludicrous was happening.

Shortly after Pat and Elaine Rundquist had left, Jackie explained, Jonathon had started behaving as they had just seen.

"It's weird," Frank commented, "but I can't seem to bring myself to treat him as a child. It's like he's a completely different person. Last night he discussed business with me!" Frank shook his head. "I never expected to find myself talking mergers with a six-year-old."

"He's not like this all the time," Jackie hastened to add. "There are times when he's just fine. Other times he acts like, well, like an old British gentleman."

The four continued their talk until Pat shook his head and turned to his wife. "We had better take him to the doctor tomorrow, honey. Let's go home now."

The Rundquists stepped into Sherry's room to collect their son. His face lighted up when he saw them.

"Mommy, Daddy, when did you get here?" He rushed over to them and gave each a big hug. "Did you bring my surprise?"

Elaine felt the secure arm of her husband steadying her. Jackie quickly walked over and picked up the stuffed animal from Sherry's dresser, gave it to Elaine.

"Here it is," Elaine said, holding it out uncertainly. "Do you like it?"

"Oh, boy, a Snoopy dog! Gee, thanks."

The next morning Jonathon was scheduled for a complete physical examination. With the doctor in attendance, the "British gentleman" again manifested.

The doctor gravely chatted with this personality, then stiffened sharply when the voice and mannerism changed remarkably. Now, instead of a small boy or a polite gentleman, a woman began addressing him. Furthermore, the woman identified herself as someone whom the doctor had quite recently treated. She had died of burns suffered in a fire and she spoke pathetically of the pain she had endured before passing away.

Dr. Holten indicated that he wished to speak to Mrs. Rundquist privately.

"I know this will sound highly unorthodox," he remarked, once they were behind the closed door of his inner office, "but I can recommend only one course of action.

"Take Jonathon to a medium," the doctor urged. "I do not find anything physically wrong with him, but I do believe the boy is possessed by spirits. Take him to a medium. I can do nothing for him.

"Naturally, I'll check the X-rays and the results of the other tests—we ran just about every one we could on him—but I doubt the tests will show anything. I'm sorry, Mrs. Rundquist. I don't know what else to say."

Elaine Rundquist managed a weak smile. "You're quite serious about this, doctor? Jonathon is *possessed?*"

The doctor shrugged his shoulders as though uncomfortable in his role as spiritual diagnostician. "It's the only answer that fits all of the symptoms, Mrs. Rundquist. I don't know what else to say."

"Thank you, Dr. Holten. I guess that's all you can say."

That night Pat and Elaine sat around the kitchen table for a long time, discussing the doctor's advice.

"I never thought I would hear a doctor make a suggestion like that," Pat offered, shaking his head. "You know, if he's going to stick his neck out like that, there must be something to what he's saying. Hell, I've sat and talked to Jonathon and I know that's not always him. I mean, I know my son."

"Should we go to a medium, then?"

"I guess so."

Elaine checked around and found that there were many reputable mediums within the Chicago area to whom they could take Jonathon. All were quite busy, however, and it was two weeks before Elaine could arrange for an appointment.

In the meantime, Jonathon continued to behave erratically. The British gentleman had disappeared and the woman who had died from burns, who had manifested in the doctor's office, had never come back. In the place of these two entities several others had appeared. Some appeared once and were gone for good. Others continued to manifest for quite some time. Before the episode would be over, Jonathon would have manifested over forty personalities over a period of six months!

In the two weeks before their appointment with the

medium, Pat and Elaine kept a careful record of the persons Jonathon claimed to be and the events he claimed to have seen. They wanted to check to be certain the medium was picking up the right signals.

They noticed that Jonathon's body seemed most attracted to recently deceased persons, and even more attracted to those who had died in accidents or had committed suicide. Many of the persons obsessing Jonathon had been killed in automobile crashes; and as a consequence, the boy became terribly frightened of riding in cars. Before Jonathon's accident on the sidewalk, the boy had always enjoyed riding in the family car.

Frequently Elaine would be quite chilled by harrowing accounts of fatal crashes described by Jonathon as they were traveling over the scene of the accident. Many of these accounts were later verified as having actually occurred.

Another consequence of Jonathon's fall was his sudden acquisition of clairvoyant abilities. One morning the boy had run down the halls of the apartment complex in which the Rundquists lived, shouting for help.

"They're drowning!" he shouted hysterically. "Somebody save them! Their boat is capsizing and they're drowning!"

Elaine managed to quiet Jonathon and ask for further details. The child described a small boat with four people fishing off the Gulf Coast of Florida. Out of curiosity Elaine called Pat and asked him to pick up a Tampa newspaper on his way home. The paper contained no account of the mishap, but the next day Pat again bought a copy of the out-of-state paper. A report of the accident was on the first page.

At last the day of the Rundquists' first appointment with a medium arrived. The three traveled to the medium's home and were given an impressive reading. The medium correctly described the different types of entities obsessing the boy and made a few interesting comments upon the case.

"This boy received a blow to his head which jarred some things out of place. As a consequence, he is like an open door to the spirit world. Those recently crossed over, confused over their deaths, see Jonathon as a portal through which they can reenter the physical plane. Most of these spirits died violently, or in a great deal of pain, and do not yet understand that they are dead."

The medium's method for dealing with these confused spirits was to place herself in a light trance and urge the obsessing entities to come forward. She conversed with many at great length, explaining to them their circumstances and indicating that they were wrong to use the small boy's body.

Elaine and Pat were astounded as they listened to these bizarre conversations. Often, after being apprised of their condition and the wrong they were doing to Jonathon, the spirits expressed contrition, begging forgiveness and promising to quit the child at once.

The medium prayed earnestly over the souls of the spirits, bidding them to go in peace.

At the conclusion of the session the medium asked to speak privately with Elaine and Pat.

"I must be completely honest with you," she told them. "That doorway in Jonathon's head is still open, and I don't know what it will take to close it. I feel strongly, however, that it will close naturally in time.

"Until then, Jonathon will continue to attract restless spirits. I feel confident that those with whom we

talked this evening will not return, but I cannot guarantee that others will not slip into him in their places. Each time that boy is near the scene of a fatal accident, his mind acts like a magnet, drawing toward him those poor unfortunates who hover around the scenes of their deaths, waiting for someone to tell them what to do. They are lost, lonely, and terribly confused. They do not realize they are dead, and they are frustrated when they can alert no one to their presence. They seize upon the opportunity that Jonathon offers them.

"You can continue bringing the child to me and I will repeatedly assist these spirits on their way, but at no time will I be able to return him to you and say, 'I have cured him.' Only time can do that.

"I would be most happy, though, if you did continue to bring the child to me, as I would appreciate the opportunity to help these unfortunate souls in whatever way I can."

Pat and Elaine glanced at each other, both thinking the same thing. Pat spoke: "We'd like to be able to do that, but I'm afraid we can't really afford . . ."

The medium held up her hand to silence him.

"My dear people, do not concern yourselves. I charge people for readings and seances, as that is my profession and my only source of income. This, though, is something different. How can one demand monetary payment for setting souls back on the path of their spiritual odyssey to the Creator?" The medium smiled warmly at them.

"I guess you're right," Elaine agreed. "Thank you."

Jonathon continued to see the medium on a regular basis for the next six months. Each time he saw her, he had picked up another entourage of lost souls, which the medium dispatched as best she could. Finally, she announced to the happy parents that the "door" had closed and Jonathon would no longer be plagued with possession.

"You might keep an eye on him, though," the medium counseled. "He has the makings of a great natural medium!"

A THREE-YEAR-OLD'S TERROR

Kelly Markham's screams brought her startled mother running toward the child's room. Kelly was huddled in a corner of the room, her arms in front of her as if fending off something terrible.

Judith Markham rushed to her daughter's side and tried to comfort her.

"What is it, Kelly? What's frightening you?"

The little girl clutched her mother and sobbed the words incoherently. "The car is coming right toward me and I can't get out of its way. It's going to hit me, I know it is! Why can't I get away from it?"

Kelly was convinced that she was going to be hit by a car and hurt badly. Judith Markham did her best to calm the child.

Three days later on June 18, 1971, Kelly was chasing a ball across the street when a car turned the corner and struck her. She was immediately killed.

The Markhams were still grieving for the loss of their oldest daughter when the strange happenings began in the house. It was scarcely a week since Kelly had died.

It started on the night of June 23. Scott and Judith Markham were preparing for bed. All at once a book, lying on the dresser, lifted itself effortlessly into the air and hung there suspended for a few moments.

Then it crashed to the floor. The two went to the book to investigate and found that, though it had been closed, the book had fallen face down on the carpet at the exact page Judith Markham had been in her reading.

The air-borne book was only the beginning of the phenomenon. Thereafter, doors and windows would open and close of their own volition, dresser drawer contents would rearrange themselves in a new order, and strange sounds manifested in the house.

The Markhams were confused about the phenomena, but not greatly concerned. As yet, the pranks had been completely harmless.

Then one night Judith heard her three-year-old daughter, Stacy, talking to someone in the bedroom that she and Kelly had shared. Curious, Judith climbed the stairs to see to whom Stacy was speaking. The child fell silent as Judith entered the room. There was no one else there.

"To whom were you talking, Stacy?"

Stacy looked annoyed. "No one," she said sullenly.

Judith shrugged her shoulders and left the room.

The next night the Markhams lost their complacency regarding the strange phenomena visiting their house. They were sitting in the living room, watching television, when low moans came from Stacy's room. Judith jumped to her feet and flicked the volume control on the set down, then she inclined her ear toward Stacy's room. The moans were coming from Stacy.

Judith and Scott went upstairs to investigate, each unmistakably worried. Scott strode forward and switched on the light. Judith screamed.

Somehow, Stacy had been stuffed inside her pillow case! Her pitiful cries were muffled by the cotton fabric. Judith extricated her daughter and brought the

girl downstairs with them. Together Scott and Judith comforted her until the little girl seemed to have recovered from her frightening experience. Then Judith picked Stacy up and swung her into her arms.

"Time for little girls to go back to bed," she said as she headed for the staircase.

Judith stepped into the room and gasped with surprise. She and Scott and Stacy were the only people in the house, and they had all been downstairs. Yet, somehow, someone had taken the pillowcase in which Stacy had been encased and placed it back on the pillow. The bed had been completely remade, as though Stacy had not yet retired for the evening.

Judith tried to hide her uneasiness from Stacy, as she turned down the covers once more and tucked the girl into bed. She gave Stacy a distracted kiss good night and went back downstairs.

"Scott, are all the doors and windows locked?"

Scott looked mildly surprised. "Of course, Judith. Philadelphia might very well be the 'City of Brotherly Love,' but nobody has bothered to tell the crooks that yet. Everything is locked up."

Judith explained to her husband what had happened.

"No one could have been in that room, yet somehow the bed was completely remade. It scared me."

Judith remained lost in thought for a few minutes. Then she tentatively raised her head and spoke hesitantly to her husband.

"Scott, all of this weird stuff started happening just after Kelly was killed. You don't suppose she's trying to communicate with us, do you? Trying to tell us she's all right?"

Scott frowned at Judith. "You know that kind of talk will get us nowhere. There's got to be a logical explanation for all these things. We'll find out what it is. You wait and see."

Judith was not quite so confident that a "logical" explanation could be found. Two nights later Scott was nearly ready to agree with her.

It was almost midnight when the talking and singing began. Scott and Judith's bedroom was on the ground floor of the house, directly below the one Stacy and Kelly had shared. The Markhams were just beginning to drowse when they heard Stacy talking to someone in her room. At the same time, another voice could be heard singing. The voice of the singer was that of an older child.

As Scott and Judith climbed the stairs, they could hear the voices more clearly. When they opened the bedroom door, however, both voices stopped. Stacy looked at them with her wide, child's eyes.

"Hi Mommy, hi, Daddy."

"Stacy, who were you talking to just now?" Judith asked.

"That's my friend. She comes and plays with me lots now."

The Markhams looked around the room. There was no one else there but the three of them.

"Where is your friend, honey?" Scott asked.

Stacy pointed directly in front of her.

"There."

The Markhams looked at each other, puzzled. They could see no one else.

Later, the two discussed the incident. They knew that it was not uncommon for children to have invisible friends, but invisible friends that could sing in a voice that others could hear? Judith wondered again if her dead daughter had returned to their house.

From then on, Stacy talked frequently with her invisible friend. She often asked for food for this playmate, and would offer it to an empty space. The friend continued to talk back.

Late one evening the Markhams were seated in the living room when all at once the temperature dropped dramatically. Icy eddies swirled around their feet.

"Get out of here!" Judith cried, unnerved.

Immediately the eddies left, and the room temperature returned to normal.

Other phenomena continued to plague the Markhams. Lights would turn on and off of their own will, and cold spots became common in various parts of the house.

The Markhams decided to purchase a dog for Stacy, to try to divert her attention from her "friend." The first night the dog was in the house it began to growl at something neither Scott nor Judith could see. It's hair stood on end and it ran to the kitchen table, cowering beneath it. Whatever invisible entity was in their house, it was clear that the dog, too, could see it.

Judith and Scott discussed the possibility of inviting a medium to their home and exorcising the entity, but Judith could not bring herself to have this done. If Stacy's invisible friend actually were their daughter Kelly, returned to them from the "other side," Judith did not want to turn the child away.

The phenomena had continued in this vein for quite some time, and the Markhams had grown accustomed to it. They patiently endured the drawers rearranging themselves, the lights flicking on and off, the doors opening and closing, the air-borne objects, all of which had become commonplace around the house.

They adopted the attitude that, in time, Stacy would outgrow her invisible friend, and replace her by living, in-the-flesh friends. They simply had to wait.

Then one night Stacy awakened the Markhams with her sobbing.

"What is it?" Judith asked as she went into the child's room.

"It's my friend," Stacy explained. "She said she isn't going to come and play with me anymore!" The little girl renewed her disconsolate crying.

"Well, that's not so bad, is it?" Judith replied soothingly. "You'll have new friends."

Stacy rubbed her eyes. "But I don't want new friends. My friend says she won't come anymore because of all the new people coming every night. I don't want those other people, Mommy, I want my friend!"

Judith could not understand her daughter's cryptic comment about the "other people," but she inadvertently felt a shiver down her back.

"What other people?" she questioned carefully.

"The ones who come and stare at me while I'm in bed or when I'm playing with my friend. They always make her leave and then they laugh at me."

Judith felt the fear growing up her spine. What was happening? What now could Stacy see that she and Scott could not?

"I always felt better when my friend was here," Stacy was saying. "She wouldn't let those others touch me. Mommy, their touch is so cold! I'm afraid of them."

Judith let a cry escape her lips and clutched her child to her. Something had gone terribly wrong. Her child's innocent play with an invisible friend was suddenly starting to turn into a nightmare.

The atmosphere around Judith had become harsh and malevolent. A chill came upon the room. Stacy began to whimper.

"Oh, he's coming toward me, Mommy!" Stacy suddenly cried. "Don't touch me!"

The girl slumped in her mother's arms. Judith cried out and shook her. "Stacy! Stacy! Answer me!" The little bundle in her arms did not move.

Judith was frantic, confused. She did not know what to do. Then Stacy stirred.

"Stacy, you frightened Mommy," Judith scolded, more relieved than angry.

The little tousled head turned upward and stared sardonically at Judith. A low chuckle escaped her lips. Judith stared in horror as a glint of evil shone in Stacy's eyes. The little girl threw back her head and started to laugh coarsely. Judith jumped up and let go of her daughter, as though she were something diseased.

"No, no!" she cried to herself, staring at the hideous thing that had just been her loving daughter. The only response was Stacy's obscene chortles of laughter.

Judith ran from the room and almost collided with Scott on the landing.

"What in heaven's name is going on?" he demanded.

Judith could only shake her head mutely.

Scott tore past Judith and entered Stacy's room. He was aghast at the sight awaiting him. Stacy sat with her back to the door, almost doubled up with the hideous laughter. Scott made the sickening realization that the vile sound was coming from his three-year-old daughter.

Stacy started to turn toward the door, her face contorted into an expression of centuries-old evil. Scott was shaken by her look. The instant that Stacy's eyes fell upon Scott, however, the expression vanished. The horrifying laughter died on her lips. She sat on the floor as if dazed.

"Stacy?" Scott asked, uncertainly.

"Is she all right?" Judith asked from behind him.

"Hi, Daddy," the little voice greeted. It was once again the sound and expression of their daughter.

"Stacy, are you all right?" Judith asked.

"Sure, I'm all right," the girl replied. "Why are you here?"

Scott walked quickly toward the girl, picked her up and carried her to her bed. "Because little girls should not be out of bed at this hour, that's why," he declared.

He placed her in bed and pulled the covers around her. Then he softly withdrew from the room, closing the door behind him. He put his arm around Judith and together the two walked downstairs.

"Now, then, tell me exactly what happened."

Judith sat down in a large easychair and told Scott what Stacy had said about the other people, and how she had undergone the radical change. Scott listened carefully, without comment.

When Judith had finished her narrative, the two reconstructed the past several weeks in their house, starting with the death of Kelly and the floating book in their bedroom. They carefully listed the various kinds of phenomena they had experienced, including the icy spots in the house and the reaction of their new dog to their home's atmosphere. They realized that they had been lulled to complacency by the relative harmlessness of the psychic activity around them. By harboring the manifestations in their home, they feared that they had now attracted less kindly disposed beings. These negative aspects were now attacking Stacy, who, as the youngest, was the most psychically attuned of the three and the most vulnerable to a negative purpose.

"Scott, do you remember that article we saw about the medium who goes to people's houses and exorcises ghosts?"

"The one we were thinking of calling before?"

Judith nodded. "I think we should call her."

"But Judith, that woman exorcises ghosts who are haunting houses. We've got some kind of weird entity haunting a person—Stacy. Can a medium cast that thing out before it possesses Stacy altogether?"

"Well," Judith replied grimly. "Let's put it this way. We had better try."

The next day the medium responded to Judith's emergency call for help. She made arrangements to visit the Markham home later that same day, after the dinner hour.

When the medium arrived, Stacy was playing quietly upstairs. The instant the door was opened to admit the medium, however, she experienced another seizure, such as the one she had undergone the night before.

Judith winced as the maniacal laughter echoed down the stairs and filled the hallway. Scott offered his hand distractedly to the medium; his face was ashen.

"Let us go up there at once," the medium announced in a brisk, yet sympathetic tone. "There is no need to prolong this."

The medium reached into her purse and drew out a medium-sized wooden crucifix. Holding it before her, she began climbing the stairs. Judith and Scott followed closely behind her.

As the medium entered Stacy's room, the laughter abruptly ceased. With an utterly evil expression on her face, Stacy looked up and snarled at the medium.

"Your attempts will be futile, you fool," the little girl hissed, with a vocabulary far beyond her three years. "I am in this body now, and I intend to stay here. Recite your silly lines, wave that puny cross. Your methods are useless with me."

Judith gasped and clung to her husband's arm. The medium remained unperturbed.

"Leave that body at once, and return from whence you came. You are no longer welcome in this house."

So saying, the medium advanced slowly upon the child, holding the cross in front of her.

Stacy began to squirm, yet the demon's voice within her remained firm.

"You stupid hulk of flesh," the demon taunted. "Put down that absurd cross and leave me be."

Still the medium slowly advanced. She began to pray softly in a monotone. Her voice started to rise, still preserving the chant-like quality of her praying.

The demon started to curse, using vile terms that made even Scott shudder. Still the medium advanced.

When the medium was within two feet of the demon, she suddenly thrust the cross before her, until it was inches away from the now-cowering form of Stacy Markham.

"In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I command you to leave this child," the medium thundered. "Depart now in the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ and nevermore show thy face or thy characteristics on earth. Depart now, relinquish the unholy hold you have over this body!"

With a loud cry Stacy fell over on her face. The medium raised the cross to the ceiling and spoke rapidly in Latin. Then she relaxed her arm and bent over the little girl. The medium placed her forefinger on the space between Stacy's eyes, just above her nose. She chanted softly, then removed her hand.

"Thank God!" Judith cried, as Stacy opened her eyes and sat up on the floor.

"Hi!" Stacy said cheerily to the medium. "Who are you? Have you come to play with me?"

The medium smiled at Stacy, then glanced back at the Markhams.

"You might say so, Stacy. You might say so."

THE POSSESSION OF REBECCA ELIAPHAS

The wind was beginning to accelerate as Rebecca left the barn and hurried down the road leading back to Schleppendorf. It was a chilly February night in Germany, 1871, but Rebecca was oblivious to the cold.

The young girl listened to the sound of horses' hoofs receding gradually in the distance. She thought of her handsome young lover, Franz Dornsbach, a lieutenant in the Chancellor's army, and a tear trickled down her cheek. Perhaps she would never see him again. He had only time to meet her for a tender farewell before joining his regiment to fight in the Lorraine. He led her to her uncle's hayloft, thinking that he might not ever see her again. Could she not give him something to carry with him to his grave?

Rebecca had trembled at the thought of his suggestion. Already she was disobeying her parents by her illicit meetings with the Gentile army officer. If any of the community's elders ever knew what she had done on this night, she would be severely punished.

The Jewish girl trudged slowly back to town, remembering every detail of this, her first sexual encounter. She wanted to forget none of it. Her only regret was that she could not bring a friend into her confidence to share her happiness.

As Rebecca drew closer to the reality of village, parents, and Sabbath teachings, she experienced for the first time a jab of shame. Soon it would be the Seder, and how could she stand with the other maidens, with her many relatives, or with the elders? She had sinned, grievously, against herself and her community of friends and relatives. She could no longer hold her head up among them.

The outline of the village was discernible in the darkness, and Rebecca recoiled when she saw it. How could she return to her people? How could she hide her guilt? The girl became agitated as increasingly the weight of what she had done pressed in upon her. The warm glow of love had faded from her cheeks, the private smile of pleasure had vanished. Rebecca clutched her worn wool shawl about her shoulders and shivered at the cold.

Frau Eliaphas glanced up at her daughter as Rebecca slipped into the house. A frown furrowed the older woman's face.

"Rebecca, where have you been? It's late."

Rebecca stared at the woman with indifference. She did not appear to recognize her mother.

"Rebecca, I asked you a question."

Still Rebecca did not respond, and Frau Eliaphas gave her daughter a sharp look. There was something vaguely frightening in Rebecca's eyes. Frau Eliaphas became alarmed.

"Rebecca, is everything all right? Why don't you speak to me?"

Rebecca gave her mother a cool stare, opened her mouth and started to speak in Latin.

The only language the girl knew was Yiddish. Furthermore, the voice was no longer that of a docile young daughter. The voice issuing forth from Rebecca's body was now that of a man, coarse and contemptuous.

Frau Eliaphas' hand flew to her mouth, stifling a scream.

"Rebecca, what has happened to you? Lord have mercy!"

"Rebecca" started to speak again in Latin, checked herself, and addressed the woman in formal German.

"Madam, please calm yourself. And please stop calling me by your daughter's name. Your daughter is no longer here."

The girl turned toward the door, as if to leave. Frau Eliaphas rushed forward to restrain her but Rebecca simply snorted in a most unfeminine fashion. With a vulgar suggestion for Frau Eliaphas, Rebecca strode out the door.

Frau Eliaphas immediately called her husband and told him the fearful news.

"Rebecca is possessed by a dybbuk, Solomon. She speaks with a man's voice in High German and in a language I believe is Latin. She was vulgar in her behavior. We must see the rabbi at once!"

Solomon Eliaphas could not believe his wife. How could their Rebecca be possessed? What was going on?

Frau Eliaphas insisted they visit the rabbi; Solomon was less eager. He urged that they wait until the following morning, by which time Solomon could observe his daughter at first hand. In the meantime he decided to search throughout Schleppendorf for his daughter and bring her home.

Solomon Eliaphas searched all night for his daughter without once seeing her. Just before dawn he wearily walked homeward, convinced that he should see the rabbi just to report that his daughter was missing. They could talk about this dybbuk business after Rebecca had been found.

Solomon and Sarah Eliaphas arranged to see the rabbi as soon as possible that morning. Each felt fear for their daughter's safety, and a heaviness for her fate.

The rabbi received the Eliaphases solemnly. Sarah Eliaphas started to talk, to explain the reason for their visit, but the rabbi waved her to silence.

"I know why you are here," the rabbi told them, "and I know where your daughter is. I have received word that Rebecca Eliaphas is across the river in the taverns—" Sarah Eliaphas gasped "—but she is no longer Rebecca Eliaphas.

"It is said that she has been entered by a dybbuk, because she speaks with a man's voice, and her voice betrays a greater education than the one obtained by Rebecca. The Gentiles there fear she is mad, for there is a wild look in her eyes, her hair and clothes are tangled and disorderly. She will not respond to her name, nor does she recognize those whom Rebecca Eliaphas would recognize. Rather, she seems to know dissolute youths who frequent that neighborhood, for she calls them by their names and asks them things about which Rebecca would know nothing. Yet these students do not know Rebecca."

Solomon and Sarah stared at each other helplessly. Solomon spread his hands before im, concentrating his gaze on them. He seemed unable to look the rabbi in the eye. Sarah, too, had lowered her head disconsolately.

"What are we to do, rabbi? Can you cast out this dybbuk and return Rebecca to us?"

The rabbi nodded his head slowly. "We can try. There are ways to cast out a demon. There is no assurance that the soul will be able to find its way back into the body, however. We shall try, though."

While the rabbi was preparing himself for the rites of exorcism, the sorrowful parents learned more about the personality that had usurped their daughter's. Solomon talked with the students who had visited with Rebecca, and he tried to learn their understanding of the strange affair.

The young men were unanimous in their opinion: Rebecca Eliaphas was possessed by an old crony of theirs, Jacob Levi. Levi had been dead for three years.

According to the students, Jacob Levi had been a brilliant student. He had attended the university at Heidelberg and studied so many other disciplines that he became disillusioned with his fathers' faith. He neglected the study of the Torah and concentrated his attention upon more worldly subjects.

When Jacob had returned to Schleppendorf, he had adopted most of the ways of the Gentiles. His own people perceived this and proceeded to ostracize him publicly for his foreswearance of Judaism. His family and friends would not speak to him nor deal with him in any manner.

Jacob Levi became a great cynic. His only satisfaction lay in nightly drinking bouts when he would sit with other students and discuss the learning he had obtained at Heidelberg, for love of the intellect had always been his great passion.

The man had become quite dissolute before his death. He was bitter, wild and unkempt. His health was failing. It was no surprise to his stein-sharing friends when Jacob Levi's body was found washed ashore on the banks of the river.

Solomon persuaded Jacob-Rebecca to follow him to the rabbi's house. Once he had everyone there, the rabbi began the rites of exorcism.

At first Jacob refused to give up the body he had stolen, or even to communicate with the rabbi. Finally, after a number of exhortations, the possessing demon began to talk.

The demon admitted that it was, indeed, the dybbuk of Jacob Levi. His ways on earth had been so dissolute that even Hell had barred him entrance, Levi claimed. He had forsaken the ways of his people for the outside world. When the Jews castigated him for his actions he was overcome with shame and remorse. He viewed his life as a series of errors, all culminating in waste. Finally, one night, stricken with conscience, he had flung himself into the river and drowned.

He had found death to be no solace, however. His wickedness and wastefulness had offended all those above and below, and he was condemned to wander around the earth as a dybbuk. He had been determined to enter another physical body as soon as possible and end his torment.

Jacob Levi had first chosen the body of a pig, but the pig was shortly thereafter slaughtered. Next he chose to enter the body of a horse, but he found this unappealing. He left the horse's body and resolved to find a human body to possess. He had been attracted to Rebecca Eliaphas.

"She was coming home from an assignation with her lover and was overcome with guilt. Her soul was losing its hold on her body as she relived her shame. It was easy to cast her aside and enter the body."

Solomon groaned softly to himself as he learned of his daughter's illicit affair.

"Yes, old man," Jacob taunted him. "This body is

no longer 'pure.' You do not want a tainted daughter back, do you?"

"I will take her no matter what she has done, if the Lord is willing," the man replied.

The rabbi took advantage of this small distraction to take Jacob Levi by surprise. With one swift blow he slapped Jacob-Rebecca across the face.

A look of surprise showed in Rebecca's eyes, replaced by fury. With a low growl Jacob struck the rabbi forcefully, on both sides of the head.

The rabbi was determined to drive the dybbuk out of Rebecca's body by making it such an uncomfortable place to be that the demon would gratefully leave. He raised his arm again and hit Jacob-Rebecca with all his strength. Blood began to seep from a split lip on Rebecca's face. A great scream issued forth from the girl's body, then it slumped to the floor, unconscious.

Simultaneously, a great explosion was heard in the air above the heads of those gathered.

"Look!" cried Sarah Eliaphas. "Look at the window."

Solomon and the rabbi followed the direction of Sarah's pointing finger. A small hole had pierced the window glass, where before there had been none.

"The dybbuk has left Rebecca's body and escaped through the hole in the window," the rabbi explained. "Rebecca Eliaphas is free."

Sarah had gone to her daughter's unconscious form, lying on the floor. She chafed the girl's wrists and gently patted her daughter's cheeks.

"Will Rebecca's soul return to the body?" she asked in alarm. "Rebecca does not respond!"

"Her soul has been wandering," the rabbi explained. "It can take some time before the soul realizes that its home has been cleared and it can return."

The rabbi raised his arms and prayed, directing the girl's soul back to its temporal habitat. At length, the color returned to Rebecca's cheeks, her eyelids fluttered open.

"Mother, Father," she told them. "I have had the strangest dream."

POSSESSION OF A CORPSE

The pretty young girl had just breathed her last, and her family had gathered mournfully round her pale, still body. Then, all at once, a deep masculine voice issued forth from the closed lips of the girl, giving the family instructions on how to revive the body!

Josie Peterson had always been one of those children who delighted the hearts of her elders. If there were chores to be done, Josie cheerfully did them. If there were children younger than she with scraped knees or wounded egos, Josie was always there to give comfort. When it was bedtime the whole family enjoyed listening to Josie's clear, sweet voice, as she sang her younger siblings to sleep with gentle lullabies.

By the age of seventeen Josie was a bright young girl with a promising future ahead of her. Her years of singing with the church choir had prompted interest in her welfare from the choir director, and in the fall Josie would be going to college with a helpful music scholarship. Then, one day in July, 1934 Josie fell ill.

Josie's father, a prominent doctor in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, rushed to his country home as soon as the message reached him regarding Josie's illness. Dr. Peterson rendered what aid he could, then admitted in a helpless whisper that there was nothing more for him to do. The family gathered around the stricken girl's bed and waited the long wait of death.

Josie had been in a coma-like sleep for many hours. All at once she startled her parents by sitting bolt upright and exclaiming that she had just witnessed her own funeral.

The Petersons hastily called the older children, and once the family had gathered, the teenager told them of her bizarre vision.

"I had died, and you were all sitting around me, like now, crying. Only I was outside of my body and I couldn't find a way to let you know I was all right. I tried and I tried, but you didn't notice me.

"Then the scene became fuzzy, and when it refocused, we were in the church. All our friends and relatives were there, even Aunt Mary from South Dakota, and you were all singing hymns. I even know which ones. It was *Beautiful Saviour*, and *This Is My Father's World*."

Sadly the family listened to Josie relate the rest of the details of her vision. It was heartbreaking to hear, but a strange kind of luminosity about her face eased the sadness of the narrative. In a way it seemed as though the girl knew she was going to die and was trying to accustom her family to the thought as gently as possible.

As soon as Josie had finished relating her experience, she confessed to some weakness, but still wished to sit upright in bed and visit with her mother, her father, her brother and sister. For the rest of the afternoon she was completely rational and suffered no debilitating pains. Other than an unnatural pallor and admitted weakness, there was no indication that she was dying. The family rejoiced at what appeared to be a turn for the better. Dr. Peterson knew better, but he kept his sad knowledge to himself.

In the early evening, however, Josie suffered a setback. Her parents and siblings gave up all hopes for her recovery and faced the fact that Josie was dying.

The young girl experienced violent spasms; her face was taut with pain. Her skin blanched; her larynx ceased to function. After a seemingly interminable length of time, she closed her eyes and died.

Dr. Peterson solemnly checked his daughter's pulse and nodded in answer to the rest of the family's fears. Benumbed with grief, no one stirred.

All at once a gruff voice issued a terse order:

"Take both of her arms and rub them as hard as you can."

The body, just pronounced dead by a practicing physician, had opened its mouth. Its lips were moving, and it was clear the voice was issuing forth from the dead girl. Startled, the family members found themselves obeying the command. In a daze they massaged Josie's lifeless limbs.

All at once a new voice sounded: "She should be upright."

Feeling increasingly confused, Dr. Peterson gently raised the body of his daughter. Mrs. Peterson hastily moved a supportive arm in back of the body.

Still another voice spoke, offering a bizarre suggestion: "If I could have her legs moved around so she could be set up on the footboard, I think she might be all right."

With a helpless shrug, Dr. Peterson attempted to effect the unusual request. As he was doing so an invisible force lifted both legs and placed them on the footboard. The Peterson's other daughter began to whimper softly.

"Don't you think the body should be allowed to rest on its back again?" still another voice interjected, and again the unseen power acted. Simultaneously it lifted Dr. Peterson to his feet and gently lowered Josie's body to its original position on the bed. There it lay, once more silent and inert.

The bewildered family stared at the corpse, uncertain as to what would follow, but nothing happened for several minutes. Finally a fifth voice began to speak softly to them. For close to three hours this fifth voice conversed with the Peterson family, explaining that Josie's body had been possessed by spirits. It was possible for possession of this sort to occur, the voice declared, with a newly dead corpse, before rigor mortis had a chance to develop.

At the conclusion of this macabre conversation, it appeared as though Josie were in a trance-like sleep. By morning the trance broke, and the family's all-night vigil was interrupted by a sixth voice, inquiring rather hazily, "Who am I?"

"You're Josie Peterson," Dr. Peterson answered.

"I am not!" the voice replied. "She died last night. But how did I get here?"

For the rest of the morning Josie's body was possessed by this sixth entity, who kept insisting that Josie Peterson had died. It could offer no clue as to its own identity. Then it seemed to relinquish control of the body, and Josie once more entered a trance-like condition.

Several hours later Josie again was roused from trance. Her body underwent many strange and dramatic changes. Finally, it seemed to experience severe fainting spells. By nightfall the body was again unassailably dead.

The family's nerves had been stretched to the extreme. They dared not leave the body's side, though, in case it should once again become animated. By mid-morning of the following day, Josie's body had remained clinically dead, and it was decided that Josie had truly passed on to the "other side." Before her family's deathbed watch had been concluded, though, six different entities had possessed Josie's dead body. Finally, Josie Peterson was truly "laid to rest."

TIME TRAVEL AND POSSESSION

The enigma of possession crosses many lines of investigation, including those of reincarnation and abnormal psychology. The case of Victoria Blok, however, reported by Russian officials, before the revolution opened yet another line of inquiry, that of time warps, or interdimensional "holes."

Victoria Blok had been an ordinary enough girl. Nothing in her previous behavior had caused her friends or relatives to express undue concern, and when, at the age of twenty-two, she married a young army officer, her family could only foresee a quiet, respectable life of matron and mother awaiting the girl.

But Victoria, apparently, was not ordained for such a quiet unobtrusive life, much to her later grief.

The circumstances that changed her life were innocuous. On the afternoon of July 9, 1914, Victoria complained of a severe headache. Excusing herself, she went to her bedroom and lay down for a short nap.

One hour later the woman awoke, screaming in terror and blurting out phrases in a foreign language.

Victoria's husband rushed to her side and strove vainly to calm her. The woman he was trying to comfort glared at him without a flicker of recognition in her eyes. Try as the young man would, he could not get his wife to respond to him.

An urgent call was sent to Dr. Mikhail Belyawsky. The doctor confessed himself baffled by the circumstances and personally summoned two of the czar's top physicians to confer with him over the strange case. They, too, were nonplussed.

It was determined that the woman in Victoria's body was speaking in archaic Italian. She insisted that she was the Countess de Navarra. The Countess glanced at her surroundings disdainfully.

"Where are my servants?" she demanded. "Where have you taken me? I must return to my husband!"

With the aid of an incredulous interpreter the Countess de Navarra told the doctors her remarkable story.

"It was a warm, sunny afternoon in Italia," she informed them. "I was feeling the heat quite strongly, and decided to retire to my bedroom for a short rest."

"Just one moment, Countess," one of the doctors interjected. "What year is this?"

The Countess appeared annoyed at such an obvious question.

"Why, it's 1356, of course," she replied.

The doctors' faces were stung with shock. Victoria Blok's husband stared at the floor sadly, as though nothing further could surprise him. Dr. Belyawsky took the Countess' hand in his own.

"Madame, something truly extraordinary has occurred. The year is no longer 1356, and you are no longer in Italy. This is Russia, and the year is 1914!"

The Countess' eyes widened in horror. She glanced down at her body—the body of Victoria Blok—and tears of fury and confusion filled her eyes.

"This is not my body," she whispered. Her eyes

sought a mirror and as she saw her reflection her hand flew unconsciously to her face. She lowered her head into both hands and said, with rising hysteria in her voice, "And this is not my face! Holy Virgin, where am I? Who have I become?"

The Countess was lowered gently into the strange bed and given a sedative. As she slipped into unconsciousness the doctors excitedly discussed her case. It was decided that the strange affair should be brought to the attention of the czar.

Czar Nicholas was fascinated with the story and immediately dispatched persons from his secret police staff to Italy to research the case more fully. The men were instructed to find out, if possible, whether there actually was a Countess de Navarra living in Italy in the fourteenth century. This investigation lasted several months.

In the meantime, the Countess responded quite favorably to her time-teleportation of several thousand miles and years. She was a plucky personality, and she enthusiastically began to explore her surroundings. She befriended her new countrymen and undertook to learn the Russian language. She confided with a delightful giggle that it was not at all that unfortunate to find herself in a young girl's body with a handsome lover as her husband. "The Count was getting old and fat," she explained coquettishly.

As the Countess adjusted to her new surroundings and the circumstances of the change, she found it easier to talk about the life she had left. She was most helpful to those investigating the case in Italy, providing the secret police with information regarding the scenes, people, and places familiar to her in her former life as an Italian countess in the fourteenth century.

After diligent research, the czar's special agents returned to Russia with a fascinating report. Yes, they told the czar and others interested in the case, there was a Countess de Navarra, and she did live in Italy during the fourteenth century.

This substantiation was exciting in itself and caused quite a stir among those who had gathered to hear the tale. But then the official added the details that broke the heart of young Officer Blok.

"The Countess de Navarra apparently led a healthy, active live until the summer of 1356," the police reported. "Then, one afternoon, she complained of the heat and retired to her bed. She was never the same again.

"When she awakened, she was hysterical, crying out in a strange tongue. The people around her believed her to be possessed by demons, and she was committed to a nunnery for care, having been judged completely insane."

Was it possible that some hole in time had caused the two women to exchange bodies, across miles of terrain and through centuries of time? In the written report of the bizarre case, it was conjectured that young Victoria Blok finding herself somehow transplanted into an older body in the fourteenth century, went mad. Or, perhaps those persons to whom she transported herself were far less able to adjust to, or understand, the macabre circumstances of the exchange, and committed Victoria before she could find a way to make them understand what had happened.

The young Russian girl suffered a tragic end, but fortunately, her partner in the involuntary exchange did not fare so badly. The Countess de Navarra assumed the name of Victoria Blok, and she and her husband survived the subsequent Russian revolution.

The two moved to the Russian colony in China, where the Countess Victoria Blok was widely known and admired. She died in Shanghai in 1927, having managed through a bizarre quirk in fate to achieve a life-span of almost six centuries.

"I WILL KILL YOU"

Susannah Nolan had never been a happy girl. Her mother had died giving birth to the girl; her father had resented Susannah for the seven years following her birth until he, too, died. The orphaned girl went to live with her older sister, who was married and occupied with rearing her own family. Susannah felt unloved, unwanted, and unhappy.

As she grew up, Susannah became increasingly moody and was often depressed. This attitude did not endear her to her sister's family, and by the time Susannah was sixteen years old, she was a bitter young lady.

Despite her mental condition, Susannah Nolan was a very lovely girl. Her figure had filled out more than adequately, and her long thick hair shone as it tumbled down her back. Her eyes lacked luster, but nature had endowed her with the beautiful bone structure of a classic beauty. The beauty of her face was cold, chiseled, for no inner light glowed from within upon her features.

There were ample young men in Sarasota, Florida, who were eager to date Susannah, as she presented a considerable challenge to the young male of the early 1950s. True affection for the girl was not often their motivation, however.

Susannah seldom went out, preferring to sit by herself and read. She was a withdrawn, introspective girl, and she seldom socialized.

Bobby Carson had made no secret of the fact that he liked Susannah Nolan. He would come to the York household, where Susannah lived, and try to persuade her to take a drive with him.

Nathan York, Susannah's brother-in-law, took an instant dislike to young Carson.

"Katy," Nathan told his wife, "you be sure and talk to your sister and tell her we don't want that Carson fellow coming around here. He comes over with his fancy foreign car, bragging about his daddy's business, and ogling Susannah. I won't have it, Katy. You tell her I said so."

Susannah heard the news sullenly from her sister. Whereas before Susannah had been indifferent to Bobby Carson, she now became interested. So she was not supposed to see him, was that it? Well, she would show them.

As soon as Susannah was alone, she phoned Bobby Carson. She explained to him that he had been asked to stay away from the York house. She requested his compliance.

"But Bobby," she said coolly into the receiver. "My brother-in-law said nothing about me coming over to see you. He just said you weren't supposed to come over here."

Bobby chuckled on the other end of the phone.

"Okay, baby, I catch your drift. You want to meet me tonight? I'll pick you up in front of the drugstore a couple of blocks from your house."

"I'll be there," Susannah answered. Then she softly replaced the telephone.

Bobby Carson knew he was being used by Susannah to spite her family, but it did not bother him. He was confident that he could use that rebellious attitude to his own advantage.

Bobby picked up Susannah at the appointed corner. He suggested they go for a drive.

"Sure, why not," Susannah replied, nervously, already tiring of her game.

The car took off toward the outskirts of the city. Several minutes later, Bobby parked the car in a secluded, wooded area. Spanish moss hung like ghostly shrouds from the surrounding trees. Bobby turned to Susannah.

"All right, Susie, let's see what you got."

Susannah's eyes widened with fear, as Bobby closed in on her.

"Just a little kiss," he promised her. "That's all. Otherwise, I won't touch you."

Feeling extremely nervous, Susannah leaned toward Bobby, her lips slightly parted. Bobby placed his mouth on hers, waited for her to relax and grow accustomed to the sensation. Then he clamped an arm on both of her arms and moved his free hand toward her breast.

"Just a little kiss, chickie," he muttered, mocking her. His hand closed roughly over her breast.

Susannah struggled violently to free herself. Her stomach clenched with nausea at the brutal young man's touch, and she feared she would vomit.

"Stop it!" she cried, repulsed and horrified. "Oh, God, stop it!"

A thought suddenly came to her, something that her sister had told her to do years before, should she ever be attacked by a man. Susannah did not know if she would be able to do it or not, for Bobby was much stronger than she and would probably divine her meaning before she could land a well-placed punch in his groin.

Thinking furiously, Susannah decided that her only hope lay in deceiving him. She stopped struggling and threw her arms around his neck. Bobby was startled, but quickly acquiesced and kissed her.

The kiss was a long one, and Susannah had to swallow several times to keep from being ill. Then she gasped and held up her hand. "Air," she explained, leaning back against the car seat. "I've got to breathe."

Bobby leaned back against the seat, too, confident now that he would not have to fight her to get what he wanted. He sighed, prepared to turn to her again.

"God!" he shrieked loudly, as Susannah's fist, with surprising strength, thudded into his groin.

"Now take me home, Bobby," she ordered coldly, "and don't you ever touch me again."

"Why, you little bitch," Bobby snapped at her, his eyes livid with rage. He reached in his pocket, drew out a switchblade. Susannah's eyes widened with terror, as the knife slowly inched toward her.

Susannah was frozen with fear. She could neither move nor cry out. Bobby, too, seemed mesmerized. Somewhere inside of himself he recognized that he was discovering a degree of violence he had not known he possessed. The urge to kill could not be quelled, though, and with trembling hands he brought the blade to Susannah's throat. Steel contacted flesh, and two tiny drops of blood started to gleam in the moonlight.

All at once two headlights illuminated the car. Someone else was approaching! Bobby hastily closed the blade, shoved it back into his pocket. Without acknowledging Susannah's presence he stepped on the gas and gunned out of the area.

Susannah sat hunched on her side of the car, clutching her throat and crying softly. The vehicle proceeded at a dangerous speed into town, until Susannah could see the lights of her own house. Bobby screeched to a halt. He refused to look at her. Susannah fumbled with the door, slammed it behind her and ran to the house. Scarcely had the car door shut when Bobby took off into the night. It was later discovered that he left Sarasota that evening. He was neither seen nor heard from again.

Susannah let herself into the house with her key. Gratefully she noted that everyone else was in bed. No one would trouble her.

Inside her own room, Susannah clutched her sides and rocked back and forth on her bed. Try as she would, she could think of nothing but Bobby's hands all over her body and the cold steel blade as it had pressed against her throat. She got up and checked herself in a mirror. Only a slight mark showed.

"Thank God that other car came," Susannah thought to herself. For the briefest moment, she allowed herself to think of what would have happened had the other car not arrived. In her mind's eye she saw the blade cut raggedly through her neck until with a small yelp she ran for the bathroom and vomited.

It took several minutes for the fear reaction to leave Susannah. When she had finally calmed herself, she returned to her bedroom.

Now that her initial fright had passed, Susannah had an opportunity to regard the incident in a different light. She thought of her sister's talk, explaining that Bobby was no longer welcome at the house. She remembered the resentment she had felt, and her subsequent call to Bobby. It was true, she thought dismally, she had asked for the treatment she had received in the car. Was that what she had wanted all along, she wondered? Had she wanted a risque petting session in the car, just to prove to Katy and Nathan that she was old enough to choose her own friends and do what she wanted?

Susannah was overcome with guilt. Over and over again she dredged up the mental image of Bobby rubbing his hands over her breasts, slipping his hand up her skirt. She wanted to disgust herself, prove to herself that she was as wicked as she now imagined herself to be. She wallowed repeatedly in the scene till her eyes filled with tears and she could take no more.

"I'm dirty," she told herself. "Dirty, filthy, unclean. Oh, God, it's so horrible!"

At length she was able to close her eyes and sleep.

Susannah's rest was fitful, uneasy. Vague forms and shadows drifted through her mind, accompanied by strange thoughts.

She dreamed she saw the faces of her family, smiling lovingly upon her. Then, as she was beginning to return the smile, their faces turned to ghastly caricatures of people, and Susannah found herself staring into the eyes of a horde of demons. She uttered a cry of fear and rushed out of the house. Then, as she was standing in the street, she saw a herd of strong, muscular horses heading toward her at full gallop. Once again she uttered a cry and ran back into the house—whereupon she awakened in her own bed.

The following morning Susannah determined to tell no one what had befallen her the night before, or of the strange dream she had had. In the ensuing

days, she became increasingly nervous and almost completely withdrawn. Nathan York began to complain to his wife about her sister's attitude.

Five nights after her escapade with the now-missing Bobby Carson, Susannah went to bed early. She was tired, she explained, and felt a headache coming on. Susannah got into bed, slid her feet to the bottom. All at once she felt something moving, under the mattress, against her thigh.

"A rat!" she thought immediately, as she jumped out of bed. "There's a rat in the mattress eating its way to the top."

Susannah called to her sister, asking Katy to come to the room.

"There's a rat in the mattress," she insisted. "I felt it."

Katy was convinced there was no rat in the mattress, but finally she had to strip down the bed and prove it to the increasingly distraught Susannah. Katy remade the bed and urged Susannah to go to sleep.

Susannah had just lain back down when the two women saw a book rise off Susannah's dresser, float across the room, and settle on a nearby chair, all of its own volition. They were astounded. There was no further phenomena that night.

Five nights later, however, Susannah again complained of feeling ill and excused herself early. It was shortly before ten P.M. Katy followed her a few moments later with a glass of water and two aspirin. When she saw Susannah she uttered a shout of horror, dropped the glass, and rushed to her sister's side. Susannah's hair stood completely on end, like the erect quills of a porcupine. Before Katy could reach her side, Susannah had hopped out of bed, screaming that her body was flying apart. Katy managed to help her sister back into bed, but Susannah had barely sunk her head onto the pillow when her body began to swell.

Katy emitted a gasp as she stood by, helplessly watching her sister bloat to hideous porportions. Susannah looked dreadful and she was moaning with pain.

All the noise in the bedroom caused Nathan York and his brother Sam to come running into the bedroom. Just as the two crossed the threshold, a tremendous explosion sounded. Nathan rushed to the window and glanced outside for the source, but there was none.

Sam stood at the foot of the bed and gaped at the distorted body of Susannah. Three sharp raps, seemingly produced from somewhere within the room, sounded and Susannah's body started slowly to return to normal size. With her family gathered around her, Susannah slipped into an exhausted slumber, unable to give the astounded Yorks any clues as to the cause of her affliction.

Susannah awakened the next morning, apparently none the worse for the physical ordeal she had undergone. Katy questioned her carefully, but Susannah was able to give no explanation of what had happened. Susannah had not yet connected the event with Bobby to the strange phenomena.

Four days passed without incident, and the York household was beginning to settle down once more. Susannah seemed to be suffering no ill effects, though her nerves were noticeably shaken.

On the fifth night, once more at ten o'clock, things began happening again.

This time Susannah's body began to bloat much more violently and rapidly than before. Soon she was painfully swelled beyond recognition, and once again

the family stood helplessly around her, not knowing what to do. The afflicted girl writhed and screamed with pain. While Katy tried to soothe Susannah, the two men once more came running to the room and tried to hold her down.

All at once the sheets flew off the bed and hurled themselves, tornado-like, into a corner of the room. Katy tried to pick them up and return them to the bed, but they twisted like living beings, trying to elude her grasp. The only way the sheets could be induced to stay on the bed was if the three—Nathan, Sam and Katy—sat on different corners of the bed.

As the three were seated in this manner, the pillow upon which Susannah's head fitfully rested shot out from under her and smacked Nathan York in the face. Then, as if controlled by some invisible force, it returned to its position under Susannah's head.

For some time the three grappled with this unseen intelligence attacking Susannah, then, abruptly, the phenomena ended with the same three explosive sounds they had heard at the conclusion of the session five nights earlier. Once again, Susannah fell into a deep sleep.

The Yorks knew they were dealing with something totally bizarre and beyond their capabilities. They were unsure as to whether anyone else in the community would be able to handle the situation, but they determined not to struggle through another episode unassisted.

Nathan York made up his mind to visit a prominent physician in the county, Dr. Cargill. He managed to take off a few hours from work the next day and called upon the man, explaining the circumstances as best as possible.

Dr. Cargill was intrigued, though he suspected his leg was being pulled by a clever hoaxster. At last he promised to visit the York home that evening.

Dr. Cargill arrived shortly after ten, ready to laugh along with the joke. Susannah seemed to have broken the timetable of seizures spaced every five nights. Whatever was troubling her, it had settled down to serious, nightly attacks, and Dr. Cargill was able to see with his own eyes that this was no prank. The girl before him was hideously distorted and very obviously in severe pain.

More violent phenomena began to manifest on that night. The furniture jumped around, the house rattled, and a series of loud explosions rocked the modest stucco building. This activity had attracted the inevitable crowd of curiosity-seekers. Neighbors and passersby gathered outside the house, demanding to know what was the cause of the disturbance.

The manifestation was especially violent as Dr. Cargill leaned over his patient and attempted to give her an examination. The pillow, which had flown into Nathan York's face the night before, again became air-borne. It flew around the room in dizzying circles until Nathan angrily made a grab for it. The instant the man's fingers touched the pillow his hair stood out on end, as Susannah's had on one of the first nights of the disturbance. A look of shock flashed over his features. The pillow, seemingly having received the reaction it had been seeking, dutifully returned to Susannah's bed and slid under her head. Nathan York stalked out of the room, declaring that he had seen enough.

Dr. Cargill completed his examination and turned to Katy, who was anxiously awaiting his diagnosis.

"I don't know what it is, Mrs. York," Dr. Cargill

told her, shaking his head. "I've never seen anything like it."

"But isn't there anything you can do, doctor? Look how she suffers!"

The doctor could only shake his head once more.

"I'm afraid there's nothing I can do."

While Katy and the doctor stood conversing, the three loud knocks sounded once more, indicating that the phenomena would cease.

"Watch her, Dr. Cargill," Katy whispered. "That's the sign."

Dr. Cargill watched with amazement as the swelling slowly went down, returning Susannah's body to normal. As always, the stricken girl fell immediately into a deep slumber.

These nightly episodes began to take their toll on young Susannah. Each morning when she awakened, her body was progressively weaker. Katy feared that her sister's resistance would become so low that the girl would be susceptible to serious, more conventional diseases.

The next evening Dr. Cargill arrived earlier, hoping to delay the trouble by giving Susannah a heavy dosage of morphine. His plan did not work.

At precisely ten o'clock a malicious laughter filled the room. Some entity sounded greatly amused at Dr. Cargill's puny efforts to silence it. Susannah went berserk, running around the bedroom and screaming hysterically. A methodical pounding noise sounded on the roof, drawing again the familiar crowd of onlookers and not a few complaints from the neighbors.

"Help me with her," Dr. Cargill shouted to Sam and Nathan. The two men sprang forward, and together the three of them managed to bring Susannah under control. No sooner was Susannah in bed, however, when a scratching noise sounded above the headboard. Katy and the three men riveted their eyes on the wall above the bed, as an invisible hand spelled out an ominous message:

"Susannah Nolan, I will kill you!"

Katy clapped a hand to her mouth and turned her frightened eyes to her husband.

"I've had enough of this," Nathan shouted to the room at large. "Leave us alone!"

Dr. Cargill looked at Nathan briefly. "Would you like a sedative?"

Nathan hung his head. "No, I'm all right. I just feel so helpless!" Nathan drove an angry fist into the palm of his right hand.

The intelligence that had entered the York household in the person of Susannah Nolan seemed to have finally summoned enough energy to operate day and night. From that moment on, the Yorks and Susannah knew no peace for several months to come.

As word of Susannah's affliction spread, newsmen and psychic investigators converged on the Sarasota home from around the country. Several managed to get interviews with members of the beleaguered household. It was one of these investigators, Stephan Boyd, who finally persuaded Susannah to unburden herself and speak of her terrible experience with Bobby Carson. It was clear to Boyd that the two events were related, but no one else in the house agreed with him. They preferred to believe that something inexplicable was happening to them, not something with a relatively simple psychological explanation.

Five months after the disturbances had first begun, Susannah finally collapsed from the constant physical

strain. She contracted a severe case of hepatitis, with other complications. During the course of this illness, Susannah lived with another sister, Mrs. Betsy Kellerman, of North Fort Myers, Florida. While in the Kellermans' home, Susannah suffered no visitation from the terrible force that seemed to have possessed her in Sarasota.

Two days after Susannah returned to the Yorks, the phenomena resumed, stronger than ever. Susannah was sitting in the living room, watching television, when she suddenly jumped up and started pointing to a corner in the room.

"Look at him there!" she cried, miserably. "He says I cannot stay here. God, I wish I were dead!"

Katy calmed Susannah and asked her what she had seen. Susannah insisted that she had seen "him" in the corner. "He" had said that if she stayed overnight in the York house he would set fire to it and burn it to the ground.

"Where shall I go," Susannah moaned softly. "What shall I do? Who will take me in?"

Katy started to assure Susannah that she always had a home with them when a sudden shower of lighted matches fell from nowhere. Susannah collapsed, sobbing, on the floor.

It was arranged for friends of the family to take Susannah in for the night. The next morning Susannah decided to stay with friends living on a small farm in northern Florida. She was determined to bring no more harm to the Yorks. From that point on, the manifestations ceased.

Psychic investigator Stephan Boyd wrote a detailed report of his own assessment of the case. In his opinion, Susannah Nolan was possessed by a fragmented portion of her own psyche, which had been severed due to the severe shock she had experienced the night Bobby Carson first tried to rape, then murder her. This shock was so severe that Susannah could not tolerate thinking about it. It broke away from her, acting like an independent entity.

Susannah had been convinced that she was in some way responsible for Carson's actions, and her continued guilt had been the energy source that kept the "entity" alive for nearly ten months. This guilt Susannah felt most strongly in the presence of her brother-in-law, Nathan York, whose strict sense of morality constantly stalked Susannah while she was living under his roof. Unconscious resentment of York's restrictive moral code became the second source of energy for the fragmented psyche; and on one level, the manifestations were designed specifically to aggravate Nathan York, such as the incidents with the pillow.

Once out of the restrictive atmosphere of the Yorks, Susannah was able to relax and quite literally "pull herself together." With the cessation of the seizures, she was able to slowly regain her strength and once more think about living a normal life.

Her nightmarish experience had taught her several things, many of which she would not pinpoint in words, but words were unnecessary. The hardened lines of her features were replaced with a softer look, and Susannah determined that no matter what her past had been, loved or unloved, she would start out afresh. Never again would she allow her mind to experience the same torment, nor would she subject those she cared for to a violent rampage, such as the one she had unleashed in Sarasota.

THEY FOUGHT A DEMON

Early in 1967, Sharon Larson decided to visit her sister in Minneapolis, thinking to offer comfort for the capture of her brother-in-law by the North Vietnamese. She did not know that she would be called upon to offer assistance far more directly to an elderly woman in dire need.

When Cindy Campbell received a telegram from the U.S. government telling her that her husband, Capt. Frank Campbell, had been shot down over North Vietnam and presumed captured, her whole world seemed to cave in around her. Captain Campbell's tour of duty had been nearly completed, and Cindy had started to count herself among the lucky ones—the wives of helicopter pilots who had their husbands returned to them. Then the telegram came, and Cindy's doctor began to treat her for nervous disorders. He advised her to relax as much as possible, or she would risk a possible nervous collapse.

When Sharon, Cindy's younger sister, learned of her sibling's distress, she decided to come to the Mill City and render what assistance she could.

The two sisters were pleased to share each other's company once more, as they had always been quite close. Cindy had started to relax somewhat, and regard the future with less reluctant hope. She even introduced Sharon to a number of her friends, and renewed the social life that had waned since receipt of the telegram.

One of Cindy's friends was an elderly woman who had lived next door to the Campbells in their former apartment building. Mrs. Hastings was a remarkable woman, full of tales from the past and a shrewd assessment of the future. The sisters enjoyed Mrs. Hastings' company, and were consequently most distressed to learn that the elder woman was declining in health. Just as they were arriving for a visit one day, a doctor, who had just exited from Mrs. Hastings' apartment, stopped them.

"Are you girls planning to visit Mrs. Hastings?" he inquired.

The girls assented.

The man reached into his pocket, handed them a card. "I'm Dr. Thorenson, and I'm afraid I must ask you not to visit her." His eyes swept backwards towards Mrs. Hastings' apartment.

Dr. Thorenson had then quietly explained that Mrs. Hastings was suffering from a mental disorder known as paranoid schizophrenia. Her mind had been slipping for some time, though she could be quite lucid whenever she made the effort. Otherwise, she was obsessed with the idea that her body had been invaded by a demon.

"She persists in believing that some denizen of Hell is trying to possess her mind," Dr. Thorenson explained, shaking his head sadly. "And the effects of her delusion are beginning to take their toll on her body. I have sent for her daughter to come to Minneapolis and take care of her. I am afraid that soon she'll be too weak to attend to herself."

Cindy and Sharon were thoughtful throughout their ride home. As they walked through the door to their apartment, Cindy picked up the mail and Sharon plopped down on the couch.

"You know, Cindy, I wish there was something we could do."

"Well, maybe there— Hey, here's a letter from Mrs. Hastings."

Cindy tore open the note and read:

"My dear Cindy, I am writing this to you while I can. I don't know where else to turn.

"Something terrible has been happening. I cannot control what I do and I no longer know who I am. My grip on reality is slipping; my mind is almost completely submerging. I can no longer control it. Please pray for me."

Cindy looked at her sister helplessly and let the letter slip from her hands. "Isn't there anything we can do?"

Sharon picked up the letter, held it in her hand. All at once her mind swirled and she was engulfed by blackness.

"Sharon, Sharon, wake up! It's over now. Wake up!"

Sharon sat up and rubbed her eyes. "What is it? What happened, Cindy?"

"You picked up the letter, then you started to sway on your feet. You fell to the ground in a kind of trance and started talking."

While Sharon listened in astonishment, Cindy told her what had happened. Apparently, the letter had exerted some kind of psychic influence over Sharon, inducing a trance-like state. While in this state she had outlined to Cindy the steps they must take to rid Mrs. Hastings of her demon.

"You said we were to do it in three sessions, three days apart, always at eleven o'clock in the morning. You were to hold the letter and slip into another trance, and I was to wait with paper and pen to take down everything that you said."

"Oh, wow," Sharon breathed. "Could I really have said that?"

"You did."

"Did I say when we were supposed to begin?"

"Uh-huh, two days from now, on Wednesday. Then on Saturday and Tuesday. Oh, and we're supposed to fast on those mornings. Then we can eat again after we're through with our sessions."

Wednesday morning Sharon and Cindy arose a bit earlier. Both were excited and apprehensive about their first attempt. Neither was sure they would be successful, and neither had any idea what would happen. All the same, they were determined to try.

At 11:00 A.M. Sharon lay down on the bed. Cindy sat nearby, pen poised over a piece of paper. With one last glance at her sister, Sharon picked up the letter and closed her eyes. Almost immediately she experienced the whirling sensation again. Though she was conscious of herself, Sharon felt that she was in a deep trance state.

She felt a sudden violent jerk in her right hand, the one clutching Mrs. Hastings' letter. Sharon felt sure this was her link to the older woman, and she felt certain that she had made contact when she felt an electrical surge throughout her arm.

Without warning, Sharon found herself inside Mrs. Hastings' bedroom. The woman was sitting up in bed, her eyes transfixed in an expression of terror.

"Enter her thoughts," Sharon heard an inner voice instruct. "Learn what is possessing her."

Sharon obeyed at once and was immediately able to

hear fierce and obscene whispers in her head (or the head of Mrs. Hastings). The voice was threatening, cruel, dripping with malice.

"You are mine, I will control you," it hissed horribly. "No one, nothing, can save you. I have you in my power now, just as I told you I would. Suffer!" Then the hideous voice burst into demented laughter and Sharon became so frightened she felt nauseated.

Sharon was desperate to do something to aid the woman, but her own inner voice restrained her. "Be silent," it commanded her. "The time is not yet come."

Sharon felt a bubble of nausea in her throat. She started to choke, lost her grip on the letter, and the connection between her and Mrs. Hastings was broken. Sharon opened her eyes and explained to Cindy with some agitation what she had seen.

On Saturday the girls undertook the second of the session, again at 11:00 A.M. They took the same positions as on Wednesday, and Sharon again held the letter. This time, just before she felt herself slip into the deeper state, Sharon heard a voice tell her clearly to have faith.

"Remember," the voice told her, "we are with you."

As before, Sharon found herself in Mrs. Hastings' apartment, once again inside her mind.

This time the demon was more violent in its exhortations to Mrs. Hastings to give up her soul to him. It screeched and cawed, mocked and defied the hapless woman, reminding her of all her shortcomings, her mistakes.

"Repeat the Lord's Prayer," Sharon's voice ordered, and the girl responded immediately. Still the demon pursued its relentless persecution.

Finally Mrs. Hastings was stricken with a hideous seizure. Sharon winced as the woman writhed uncontrollably upon her bed. Sharon pleaded with her unknown advisor for the power to intercede, but once again the voice cautioned her to wait and be silent.

"My God, I can bear no more!" Mrs. Hastings sobbed. "Release me, you abhorrent thing, or I shall die. God have mercy, let me die. Let me die!"

"Repeat: Deliver me from evil," the voice ordered quickly, and Sharon obeyed. "It is enough. Return to your body."

Immediately Sharon found herself back in her own bedroom. The voice spoke again. "Just one more time and we shall be victorious."

During the next three days both Cindy and Sharon keenly felt the weight of their mission. They prayed and meditated often, girding themselves for the task ahead.

On Tuesday both girls awakened early, as they had on each morning of their sessions. They spent the hours before eleven o'clock in quiet meditation. When the hour approached, they again took their customary positions in the bedroom, and Sharon grasped the letter.

On the two earlier sessions the demon had been unaware of Sharon's presence in Mrs. Hastings' mind. On this occasion, though, Sharon felt a surge of power and knew it was time to confront the obsessing entity.

"Leave this woman at once," she told the demon authoritatively. "You are powerless to hurt her. My sister and I have been summoned to her aid; Good is on our side. We cannot fail."

At the sound of her voice the ghastly entity turned its full attention upon Sharon. It came closer and

closer to her, whispering threats so vile, so hideous, that the girl was paralyzed. She could not move; she could not speak. The entity shrieked its rage upon her and the girl felt certain that she would be consumed.

She became aware of her sister's presence and managed to choke out one word: "P-p-pr-ay!"

From a seemingly long way off Sharon heard her sister's voice: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

The paralysis lifted from Sharon's body, and she felt herself suffused with light and strength. She addressed the demon once more with quiet assurance.

"You are powerless over this woman now. For what you have done, though, you are condemned to utter darkness. Leave her now, and as you go, tell her that she never was insane, only a victim of your evil machinations. Leave now, I command you!"

For a moment all was still, then Sharon saw a monstrous form descend into a dark abyss. As it vanished, Sharon mouthed the words the inner voice gave to her: "Go in peace."

Sharon opened her eyes and found herself once more in Cindy's bedroom. Her body was limp, bathed in sweat. Yet through her utter exhaustion she felt a glow of accomplishment. Cindy was sitting beside her, and silently the two girls reached for each other. They wept together as Sharon explained how the demon had been finally expunged from Mrs. Hastings.

"She's free, then," Cindy said brokenly. "She's free of that . . . thing."

"Yes, but we should never tell anyone what we have done. Not Dr. Thorenson, not Mrs. Hastings' daughter, not even Mrs. Hastings, because it wasn't us, Cindy. That voice told me what to do every step of the way."

Cindy nodded. Then they both hugged each other and cried.

The two sisters decided to wait for Mrs. Hastings to contact them again before they went to visit her. After all, they reasoned, her system had been under a severe strain and she would need time for recuperation. They felt confident that, just as soon as she was able, Mrs. Hastings would again write and invite them to visit.

Some three weeks later, however, Cindy encountered Mrs. Hastings' daughter at the supermarket. She tactfully inquired after the elderly lady's health, adding that she had heard Mrs. Hastings was "very ill."

"The doctors had said she would not live," the daughter replied, "but then a very wonderful thing happened. She had been having a terrible convulsion when all at once it ceased. She opened her eyes and smiled beautifully at me. 'It's all over,' she said, and from that moment on she was better. She's almost ready for visitors now," the woman added.

"My sister and I were very concerned about her," Cindy remarked. "What day was it, may I ask, that she recovered?"

The woman smiled brightly. "Why, it was just two weeks ago. Tuesday, it was. Right about eleven in the morning."

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